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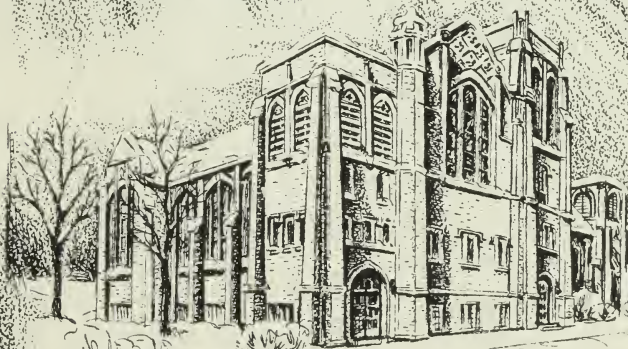
*St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church*

100th ANNIVERSARY

1854



1954



STERLING, ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY



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Centennial Anniversary
of
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sterling, Illinois

1854 – 1954



St. John's Today

Acknowledgment

St. John's Centennial Committee wishes to commend the Ladies' Social Circle for its fine service to the congregation in having this anniversary booklet published on the occasion of St. John's Centennial. The decision of the Social Circle to sponsor this project makes it possible for all the people of St. John's to know more about the past history of our beloved church, and credits the good ladies with another fine piece of work, done in the interest of the congregation.

The Centennial Committee also wishes to express its appreciation to Miss Hazel Chalmers of Washington, D. C., for her fine contribution in the designing of the cover for this booklet. It is truly the work of a master artisan. Miss Chalmers, a former member of St. John's, is the artist who did the beautiful portrait of Dr. Harris which hangs in the narthex of our church.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Edwin R. Bowers
Mrs. Nevin R. Loux
Mrs. Clarence Bressler
Pastor A. L. Grewe
Leo Lund
Charles Behrens
I. Clyde Eshleman
Gunnar Benson

Foreword

"My Church, my Church, my dear old Church!
My fathers' and my own!
On prophets and apostles built,
And Christ the cornerstone!"

This little booklet, prepared on the occasion of St. John's Centennial Anniversary, is an attempt by one of the lay members of this congregation to bring to your attention, in word and picture, the story of the first one hundred years in the life of our church.

For the past 18 months I have lived in close communion with the good people who made St. John's history. I feel almost as if I had been personally acquainted with all of them. It would be impossible for me to bring to you, within the confines of this book, all the rich experiences I have enjoyed with these, the builders of our church. I have briefly told the story as I found it. Important events and personages may have been overlooked. If so, it was not intentional. I can only ask that you be charitable in your criticism.

The preparation of this booklet would have been well nigh impossible, had it not been for the excellent work done by Dr. E. C. Harris in preserving historical materials and records of our church. His published booklets were invaluable as were the almost complete set of Synodical Minutes and the Proceedings of the Church Council. Access to the complete files of the Sterling Daily Gazette and assistance from synodical archivists has also been of great help.

The Centennial Committee, appointed by the Church Council, has been very helpful to the writer in many ways. I especially wish to recognize Edwin R. Bowers who did so much in organizing this material for the printer. Space does not permit the listing of all who have helped. Some have come forward with important bits of information, others with needed pictures, and still others by showing an interest in this project.

St. John's has had a rich history during the first hundred years. Let us all begin now to build an equally fine history for the second century in the life of our church.

"All else beside, by storm or tide,
May yet be overthrown;
But not my Church, my dear old Church,
My fathers' and my own!"

Gunnar Benson,
Centennial Historian



ALFRED L. GREWE, D. D.

Pastor of St. John's

Since 1945

One Hundred Years

Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Four! Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Four! Truly great dates in the history of our beloved St. John's Church! It was on the third day of December, a century ago, that eleven men and women organized our congregation. Now it becomes our high and holy privilege to observe the centennial.

Mighty changes have been effected in all parts of the world during the past one hundred years, so much so, in fact, that we are reminded of the lines of one of the great Christian hymns: "Crowns and thrones may perish, Kingdoms rise and wane." The second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries were years of unusual inventions, inventions which our earliest ancestors would have believed to be impossible: The telephone, electric light, automobile, aeroplane, countless household appliances, radio, television, etc. Although geographically still the same, the world has been made much smaller, so small that it can be circled in flight in only a few brief hours; so small, that today man's voice is carried across continents and oceans as well.

St. John's Church likewise has changed in more ways than one. Then, only a handful of members; now—and for many years already—one of the largest congregations affiliated with the Illinois Synod. Then, in the early days, men, women and children, remembering the immortal words of Jesus, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it," came together on the Lord's day to worship the Triune God in rented quarters. Great was the joy of the people when the congregation was privileged to dedicate "The Little White Church in the Locust Grove" in 1857. Another change followed when the old brick church was dedicated in 1892. And still another, when the present sanctuary was dedicated to the services of the Lord in 1924.

The years brought changes in clerical leadership also. Eight ministers of the Gospel have, at one time or another, served St. John's throughout the first century.

It would appear to your pastor that, in observing the One Hundredth Anniversary, we should not primarily aim at enlarging upon changes which have come to pass. On the contrary, we ought to rejoice that in certain vitally important phases St. John's has remained the same. Such simply had to be the case, for the Lord who has been worshipped through the years once said: "For I am the Lord, I change not."

Through the years the members of our congregation have taken and maintained a lively interest in sharing Christ with the world, never forgetting the divine commission: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In obedience to Christ's command the eleven organizers confessed one hundred years ago: "We therefore dedicate ourselves anew to God and HIS SERVICE." The beautiful missionary spirit prevalent through the years has brought great, even boundless joy to all her pastors. Let us also dedicate ourselves anew to this great service!

The aim and purpose of organizing a Christian church was stated in these words a century ago: "Being desirous of promoting His glory in the salvation of blood-bought souls." Praise God, this chief purpose has never been forgotten. That is why Christ crucified and risen has been preached at all times because it is only and solely through faith in Him that man can be saved in all eternity. The aim of all eight pastors has been to lead each and every member to see clearly that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Today, on our One Hundredth Anniversary, we dedicate our lives anew to share "a changeless Christ with a changing world."

Your Pastor,

ALFRED L. GREWE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE ILLINOIS SYNOD
of the
U. L. C. A.
Chicago, Illinois

December, 1954

St. John's Lutheran Church
Sterling, Illinois

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus:

Your sister churches of the Illinois Synod, with whom you are associated in the great enterprises of the Kingdom of God, present to you their congratulations on the one hundredth anniversary of your organization.

As we think of this long span of time spent in the service of God's people and God's Kingdom, surely we are mindful that God's blessing and grace have been bestowed upon you in a very special way. For his everlasting mercy and sustaining grace, we thank Him in your behalf.

May we likewise express our deep appreciation of what God's grace has accomplished through you during these many years. It would be interesting to know how many have heard the saving news in Christ Jesus because of your witness and splendid Stewardship. It would be interesting to know how many Christian homes have been founded through your influence. Surely God's grace has dwelt in you richly and you have been most faithful.

For all this we thank our Heavenly Father and pray that His blessing and guiding grace may continue to rest upon the members of St. John's Lutheran Church through all the days to come.

Very sincerely yours,

HARMON J. McGUIRE, PRESIDENT
The Illinois Synod of the
United Lutheran Church in America

THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
LUTHERAN CHURCH HOUSE

231 Madison Avenue
NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

December, 1954

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Third Avenue at Seventh Street
Sterling, Illinois

Dear Christian Brethren:

One of the noblest phrases in our whole Christian vocabulary is "Mother Church." God, our Father, has chosen the Church to be Christ's holy bride. Mother Church has brought all of us to the second birth in Holy Baptism. She loves all her children, tends them, and teaches their souls like a true mother.

The highest joy of the United Lutheran Church in America, aside from her Lord, is her 4,017 congregations. Each of them is a beloved daughter. Although a true mother must never have favorites, St. John's Church is in the center of the affection of the entire, broad United Lutheran Church in America today.

Our nation-wide Church extends her arms to you on this glorious anniversary. We are cheered by the faithfulness and generosity which St. John's Church has eagerly manifested in the past and we invoke the power and the glow of the Holy Spirit on you as your congregation goes from strength to strength.

F'CF/md

Fraternally yours,

FRANKLIN CLARK FREY

STERLING - ROCK FALLS MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

December, 1954

St. John's Lutheran Church
703 Third Avenue
Sterling, Illinois

Dear Friends:

The members of the Sterling-Rock Falls Ministerial Association join me in congratulating you on the occasion of your Centennial celebration. We wish for you a coming century of growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The ministers of St. John's Church have distinguished themselves for many years as leaders in building christian fellowship in the community and in fostering the ecumenical spirit. Your ministry has indeed been a ministry to the community as well as the pastoring of your congregation.

We commend you for your interest and oversight in the training of young ministers who look to the Church for guidance in their first efforts as ministers. Such interest in youth and their churchmanship has extended also to young men most of whom will be laymen in the Church. Through such community organizations as the YMCA and the Boy Scouts your ministers have given freely of their time and energies.

We bespeak for your present minister the confidence, encouragement and support that he will need to lead you into the new century. May your good work continue to be blessed by Him who ministers and who calls us to minister in His name.

Sincerely yours,

LEE E. DAVIS,
President

Early History Of Sterling

The City of Sterling had its beginning from two small towns or villages known as Harrisburgh and Chatham. Harrisburgh, which was located in what we think of as the First Ward, was settled first, its founder and first citizen being Hezekiah Brink. Mr. Brink made an exploring trip along the Rock River early in 1834, following the river from Dixon to the Indian village of The Prophet (Prophetstown), having made a short side trip along Elkhorn Creek to the mouth of Spring Creek (near Emerson). Returning to Dixon, Mr. Brink rested a few days at the cabin of Father Dixon before he returned to the site he had selected for his claim on the north bank of Rock River east of the street we call Broadway in the City of Sterling. Here, in early June of 1834, Hezekiah Brink erected a crude cabin of logs and drifted lumber before he returned to Indiana for his family.

Hezekiah Brink and his family made the trip to Illinois the following spring and occupied their cabin on the Rock River about May 1, 1835. The closest neighbors to the Brinks lived at Dixon and Prophetstown. Near them flowed the beautiful Rock River, the Sinissippi of the Indians, and all about them was the boundless rolling prairie, the only variation in the landscape being the patches of timber. The place, in spite of its beauty, was desolate enough and gave no hint of the thriving city which was to rise here in a few years.

The Brinks were soon joined by others and the little settlement began its career. In the summer of 1836, Captain D. S. Harris, of the Steamer Pioneer, came up the river with a load of provisions, and landed above the rapids, the settlers having towed his boat to the landing point with their teams of oxen. Many of the provisions were sold to the settlers, Captain Harris taking a half interest in the town as payment for them. The settlers showed their appreci-

ation of the Captain by naming their little town Harrisburgh, in his honor.

Captain Harris, Hezekiah Brink, Elijah Worthington and others immediately had the town surveyed. Harrisburgh, as originally platted, extended north from the river between what is now Thirteenth Avenue and the east limits of the city.

Early in 1835, William Kirkpatrick, a resident of Sangamon County in Illinois, made a claim and built a cabin on land which lay a little to the west of Harrisburgh. Mr. Kirkpatrick had the land platted as a town in the spring of 1836 and called it Chatham. During the summer he hauled in lumber from his mill in Stephenson County and built the first frame house in what is now the City of Sterling. Chatham extended north from the river between what is now Seventh Avenue and Avenue A. Nelson Mason and John D. Barnett soon purchased the interest of Mr. Kirkpatrick in the town, put some improvements in the frame house he built, and opened up a store with an assorted stock of merchandise. This store became the trading center for the settlers in the nearby communities.

There was some additional building in these early days but the growth of both Harrisburgh and Chatham was slow for some time. Between the two towns was a strip of neutral territory from what is now Seventh Avenue on the west to Thirteenth Avenue on the east. It was in time settled and for a time was the location of the Post Office, which had at first been located in Chatham and later in Harrisburgh. The locating of the Post Office in this neutral territory was the first event which helped to break down some of the rivalry which existed between the two towns. When steps to organize Whiteside County were under way in 1839, the two little communities decided to join forces and pull together with the hope that they might provide the site for the county seat.

After many meetings, it was decided to settle the naming of the consolidated town by the tossing of a coin. The representatives for the coin tossing ceremonies from the two towns were Elijah Worthington and Hezekiah Brink for Harrisburgh and Hugh Wallace and Nelson Mason for Chatham. The Chathamites won the toss and the name Sterling was their choice. The winners were also to select the site for the County Court House in the event it was awarded to the newly consolidated town. Broadway had been decided upon as the dividing line, so the Chathamites chose Block 57 just west of Broadway between Third and Fourth Streets.

The uniting of forces was to pay off for a time, at least. The county seat was located in Lyndon in 1839, but was moved to Sterling in 1841. In 1842, county affairs were again held in Lyndon, only to be moved back to Sterling in 1844. Construction on the Court House in Sterling started in 1842. It was first used in 1844, and served until 1857, when the people of Whiteside County decided by a vote of 1631 to 1572 that the county seat should be moved to Morrison.

The growth of Sterling was slow until the coming of the railroad. Up to that time it was considerably behind Fulton, Albany and Dixon. Once the iron horse made his appearance in Whiteside County, all this was changed, as now Sterling had the best of transportation for its industries. The combination of excellent transportation and water power was the impetus that the community needed to bring a flood of new settlers and business interests from other parts of the country. One can almost say that the spurt in growth of the City of Sterling dated from the arrival of the first train in 1856. In 1855, Sterling had a population of 1,741; in 1860, 2,427; in 1870, 3,998; and by 1877 it had reached 7,500.

It was not long after Sterling's first settlers located on the banks of the Rock River that they began to turn their at-

tention to other things besides the building of homes and the feeding and clothing of their families. Most of Sterling's first citizens came to Illinois from the eastern states. Back east they had enjoyed many privileges which were missing in their new-found home and as soon as the needs of the physical body had been met, they began to think of spiritual needs, and cultural opportunities for their families.

The first school in Sterling was taught by Mrs. E. B. Worthington, who taught her classes in her home. Other early teachers were Mr. L. Whipple and Mr. William H. Andrews, who held class in a building erected for a shop on Seventeenth Avenue in the fall of 1838. School was also held in a stone school-house built opposite Lincoln Park and in the basement of the Presbyterian Church. Ward schools were built on the sites occupied by the present Lincoln, Central, and Wallace Schools between 1859 and 1866.

The early settlers of our community were for the most part Christian, God-fearing people and long before there were any churches to be found in Sterling, the people gathered in neighborhood homes so that they might worship together as they had in the communities from which they came. At first these good people were led in the worship of their God by their own neighbors who lived good Christian lives. In time, travelling preachers or missionaries would occasionally pass through and preach to the people, baptize children and perform other services of the ministry.

It was only natural, then, as time passed, that those of like faith should seek each other out and become the nucleus for a congregation of Christians who would meet regularly and worship God according to the practices of their chosen faith. The first religious society in Sterling was formed in 1838 in the cabin of Hezekiah Brink. This was the beginning of what is now the First

Methodist Church of Sterling (Broadway).

The Presbyterians of Sterling organized on November 4, 1844. This group built the first church in Sterling, starting construction in 1848. In 1854, St. John's Church was organized. With the coming of the railroad in 1856 and the accompanying influx of people, many other church groups were formed in the next couple of decades.

Sterling was organized as a city under a special charter granted by the General Assembly of the State of Illinois and approved February 16, 1857. The first election under the charter was held in April of that year, and resulted in the choice of Lorenzo Hapgood for Mayor; John Pettigrew and David H. Myers, as Alderman for the First Ward; Henry

Bush and D. R. Beck, for the Second Ward; and James Galt and B. G. Wheeler, for the Third Ward. The City Council met for organization at Boynton's Hall, on the evening of April 23, 1857. Sterling was now a full-fledged municipality and in the next two decades was to make itself heard and felt near and far through its industries, schools, churches and other enterprises.

There is much more of interest that could be said about the development of Sterling but as this booklet was prepared primarily to tell the story of the first hundred years of the existence of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sterling, it will be left to the reader to observe for himself what has been accomplished from such humble beginnings one hundred and twenty years ago.

Early Lutheranism

It was no accident that St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sterling came into being on Sunday, December 3, 1854. There were many contributing factors that brought about the organization of this congregation of Lutherans one hundred years ago. Events that were to have a bearing on the founding of St. John's had their beginning more than three hundred years before the first settler came to Sterling when Martin Luther made his break with the Roman Catholic Church. Generations of the followers of Luther planted Lutheranism in many parts of Europe and with the settling of the New World, the Lutheran Church also made its way across the Atlantic.

Lutheranism met with many obstacles in its early days, but in spite of the many hardships it continued to grow. Many of the early settlers had come to this country in search of religious freedom. As the pioneers moved westward across our great country they established the Lutheran Church wherever they chose to settle.

Beginnings In Illinois

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803,

thousands of descendants of the early German immigrants on the east coast migrated to the Midwest, drawn there by the wonderful stories of the fertility of the land. As early as 1816 or 1819, there being some doubt about the exact date, the first Lutheran Congregation was organized in Illinois. St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Don-gola, Union County, holds this signal honor, being at that time a member of the Synod of North Carolina and adjacent states.

Once the Lutheran Church had been established in Illinois, other congregations soon were organized, mostly in the southern part of the state. In 1835, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the west was organized in Louisville, Kentucky, being composed of congregations from Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee. This organization was dissolved in 1846 and on October 15, of that same year, the first Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Illinois was formed at Hills-boro. This marked the real beginning of the organized Lutheran Church in the State of Illinois.

Synod of Northern Illinois

When Synod met at Oregon, Ogle County in September of 1850, a decision was made to divide the Synod of Illinois to overcome the inconvenience of travel and the amount of time required in traveling to and from meetings. The boundary line was set "at a line running east and west in the region of Peoria," and a committee consisting of Pastor Stroh, Donmeyer, Burkett and Thummel was appointed "to meet with such other brethren in Northern Illinois and Wisconsin as might be desirous of perfecting the organization of a new Synod."

This committee met in the home of Dr. C. B. Thummel in Palmyra Township, Lee County on May 14, 1851 and drew up the articles of a constitution for the new Evangelical Synod of Northern Illinois. It also was determined at this time to hold the first regular Synodical Session at Cedarville in Stephenson County, September 18-23, 1851. At the time of its formation the Synod was composed of twenty congregations and seventeen preaching stations, but there were only three church buildings.

From its beginning, the newly formed Synod of Northern Illinois manifested a

great interest in missionary work, with its pastors traveling to nearby communities, where they preached to the people in homes, schoolhouses and other public buildings as often as it was possible to make such trips. It was in this way that the Lutherans in, and about, Sterling were served by the ministry before St. John's was organized. Dr. C. B. Thummel of Prairieville was one, who on occasions came to Sterling to preach to the Lutherans who were found here.

A further impetus was given to the missionary program of Synod, when at its third session, held in Galesburg in October of 1853, eight ministers volunteered as exploring missionaries for the purpose of "bringing the word of God to the churchless Lutherans of Northern Illinois and nearby states." This action taken by Synod in 1853 was to have considerable bearing on the organization of St. John's in Sterling, as two of the men who volunteered as exploring missionaries were Dr. Thummel of Prairieville and Rev. William Uhl, who in this same year moved from Peru to Dixon. The nearness of these two men, beyond a doubt, brought closer the day when a congregation of Lutherans could be formed in Sterling.



MARTIN LUTHER

St. John's Is Born

The missionary trips of Rev. Uhl soon brought him in contact with the Lutherans in the vicinity of Sterling, and, finding a nucleus for a congregation, he agreed to unite with them and serve as their first pastor. So it was that on Sunday, December 3, 1854, Pastor Uhl met with four men and six women in the old courthouse in Sterling to organize themselves "into an Evangelical Lutheran congregation," to be called St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sterling, Illinois.

The charter members, besides the pastor were Isaac Reed, Mary A. Reed (wife of Isaac), Catherine E. LeFevre (daughter of Isaac and Mary Reed), Mary A. Reed (daughter of Isaac and Mary Reed), M. C. Auld, M. D., Susan Auld (wife of Dr. Auld), Benjamin Reed (brother of Isaac), Harriet Reed (wife of Benjamin), John Hecker, and Elizabeth Hecker (wife of John Hecker).

Mounted on one of the pages of the 1854-1865 Church Register is the original copy of the first constitution of our church. This valuable and interesting document is in Pastor Uhl's own handwriting and is signed by the founders of the church, the pastors name heading the list. A copy of this, the original constitution of our church, has been reproduced on pages 15 and 16 of this booklet.

Charter Members

Who were these founders of St. John's? Where did they come from and how did they earn their living? It is only natural that we should be a little curious about this band of Christians who played such an important part in the founding of our church. Very little is known about some of them, but the writer, in his research, has been able to gather some scraps of information which he will pass on to you.

Dr. M. C. Auld was a practicing physician in Sterling at the time, but soon moved away, and there is no record of

the family after the first couple of years. Dr. and Mrs. Auld were regular visitors at the Lord's Table, and the Doctor was a member of the first church council.

The occupation of John Hecker is not known, and whether or not he and Mrs. Hecker left Sterling has not been established. The first Church Register shows that they were dropped from membership on February 3, 1857. The minutes of the organizational meeting show that Mr. Hecker was appointed Deacon and Treasurer of the church at the request of the congregation.

Isaac and Benjamin Reed were sons of Michael and Catherine (Keiser) Reed and were both born in Franklin County, Pa. Isaac was the eldest and Benjamin the ninth child in a family of eleven children. Their parents, who were engaged in farming, were both members of the Lutheran Church.

Isaac Reed was born in 1803 and spent his youth on his parents farm. He married Mary Ann Commerer and to this union were born eleven children. Isaac and Mary Reed came to Whiteside County, and settled near Emerson, where they engaged in farming for many years. The Reeds were members of St. John's until 1870 when they were dismissed by letter so that they might help to organize the Ev. Lutheran Church at Empire (now called Emerson). Isaac Reed was appointed Elder by Pastor Uhl at the organizational meeting of St. John's, at the request of the congregation, and held that office until 1870. He served as the first lay delegate from St. John's to the Synod of Northern Illinois at the meeting held in Dixon in October of 1856, and was further honored by being chosen to represent the Synod of Northern Illinois at the meeting of General Synod at Reading, Pa., in May, 1857. Mr. Reed again represented St. John's at Synod in 1863 and 1868. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Reed were very generous in

their support of the church. In 1877, the Reeds moved back to Sterling and united with the Presbyterian Church of this city. Isaac Reed died Feb. 18, 1889, and Mrs. Reed joined him on July 28, 1897.

Benjamin Reed was born Sept. 11, 1822, and grew to manhood on the old homestead farm in Pennsylvania. After attending the subscription and district schools of the county, he learned the cabinet maker's trade, which he followed for a number of years. On Feb. 22, 1844 he married Harriet Clark, and to this marriage were born ten children, several of whom became members of St. John's. In 1854 the Reeds came west to Illinois and settled in Hopkins Township, Whiteside County. Here they farmed for almost thirty years. Upon leaving the farm they took up their residence in Emerson, living there for about two and one-half years before moving to Sterling in 1884. For a time, after coming to Sterling, Mr. Reed conducted a feed store on Second Avenue. From 1891 until 1902, Benjamin Reed served as sexton for St. John's.

Harriet Reed was born in 1823, the daughter of a prominent family in Franklin County, Pa. Her grandfather was the first judge in that county. Mrs. Reed is remembered as a wonderful wife and mother, and a friend to all who knew her. The Reeds held membership in St. John's until the formation of the Emerson Lutheran Church in 1870. On April 10, 1887, they rejoined St. John's by letter from Emerson. Their daughters Kate, Clara and Edna also transferred from Emerson on that date. Of the ten children of Mr. and Mrs. Reed, only Clara (Mrs. F. R. Taylor, of this city) survives. Mrs. Taylor has celebrated her 93rd birthday and is a remarkable woman for her advanced age. When the writer last visited her she recalled many interesting facts about her parents and the early days in our church. She lives with her daughter, Miss Helen Taylor, a teacher in our local schools.

Benjamin and Harriet Reed lived to

celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of our church in Dec., 1904. They were the only survivors of the charter group whose names still appeared on the membership rolls of the church. The Benjamin Reeds were true and faithful members of St. John's for many years, giving generously of themselves and their means to the support of the church. Mrs. Reed passed from this life on July 11, 1907. Her good husband, last surviving male member of the founders of St. John's, went to his heavenly reward on Jan. 18, 1909. The large stained-glass on the west side of the sanctuary, showing Christ as a boy, is a memorial to these two fine Christians, a tribute from their children.

Mrs. Catherine E. LeFevere, eldest child of Isaac and Mary Reed, was born in Pennsylvania in 1830. She came west with her parents and was married to Amos LeFevere shortly before the organization of St. John's. Mr. LeFevere was admitted into membership with St. John's, by baptism, on March 22, 1862. Amos LeFevere was a son of Mr. and Mrs. John W. LeFevere, who gave to the church the lots on which the church and parsonage stand. Amos and Catherine LeFevere later joined with the Presbyterian Church in Sterling. Mrs. LeFevere died in 1903.

Mary A. Reed, third child of Isaac and Mary Reed was born in Pennsylvania in 1833. She, too, came to Illinois with her parents and lived on the family farm in Hopkins Township until her marriage to William Caughey who joined St. John's in 1860. Mr. Caughey served as Deacon from 1862 to 1865. The Caugheys transferred their church affiliation to the Presbyterian Church in Sterling and in time moved to Kansas where Mrs. Caughey died in 1910. Mrs. Mary Reed Caughey was the last survivor of the charter members.

Although that little band of charter members of our church has long since left us, their memory and what they did in establishing the first Lutheran Church

in Whiteside County will long stay with us. Could they but see and know St. John's as it is today, they would certainly feel a real sense of pride in what they did one hundred years ago.

It is only fair to say that there were others, not present on Dec. 3, 1854, who became connected with the church in its earliest days and played a very prominent role in its development almost

from the start.

The preceeding paragraphs, in brief, have been an attempt to relate the many incidents, which, directly or indirectly, had a bearing on the founding of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sterling. The pages that follow will tell, in word and picture, the story of the first one hundred years in the life of our beloved church.

Dec. 3, 1854.

*Being assembled
in the name of the Tri-
une God, Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost; and being de-
sirous of promoting His glo-
ry in the salvation of blood
bought souls, deem it our
duty to stand regularly
connected with the vis-
ible Church of Christ.*

*We therefore dedicate our-
selves anew to God and His
service, in that we this
day organise ourselves into
an Evangelical Lutheran
Congregation in the town
of Sterling and county of
Whiteside, state of Ills.*

*We regard and receive the
word of God as our only in-
fallible rule of faith
and practice, and*

adopt for our disciplin
the formula of the gen=
eral Synod of the Ev. Luth.
Church of these united states.

William Ahl (Pastor)

Isaac Reed

Mary A Reed.

Cath. & La Zevan

Mary A Reed

M. C. Auld

Susan Auld.

Benjamin Reed

Mariet Reed

John Hecker,

Elizabeth Hecker



St. John's Pastors

1854-1954

REV. WILLIAM UHL

1854 - 1858

Rev. William Uhl, St. John's first pastor and organizer of our church, was born in Alleghany County, Maryland on Oct. 28, 1819. He came from a long line of staunch Lutherans who had come to this country from Germany during the 18th century. In 1840, William Uhl was married to Lucinda Cook at Wellersburg, Pa. To this union were born two sons and two daughters, all of whom settled in Illinois and Iowa.

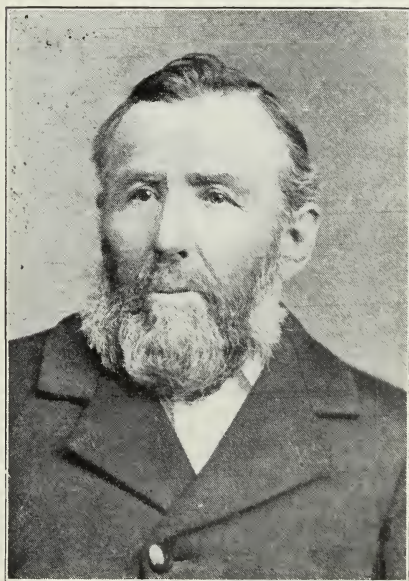
Having early shown an interest in the work of the church, Mr. Uhl entered Gettysburg College in 1842 to prepare for the ministry and was graduated in 1845. He entered the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1844, serving for several years in the east.

In 1851, Rev. Uhl came west to Peru, Illinois, remaining there as pastor until 1853. While in Peru he founded two churches and was largely responsible for the erection of a church which was dedicated on Christmas Day in 1851. Rev. Uhl was received into membership in the Synod of Northern Illinois on Oct. 7, 1852, at its second annual session, held in Chicago. The minutes of Synod record the fact that he preached at a candlelight service and was described as a "sound, serious clergyman, who reads his sermons." This was the beginning of a service of almost forty years in Illinois, interrupted at times by recurring illnesses.

Rev. Uhl came to Dixon in 1853, where he served as pastor until 1858, except for one year. Here he remained for many years, engaged in farming and other enterprises while he continued to preach to the Lutherans of the vicinity, including those to be found in Sterling. His efforts in Sterling resulted in the organization of St. John's on Dec. 3,

1854. At this time Pastor Uhl was dividing his time between Dixon and Sterling and in 1855 he saw the completion of a fine brick church in Dixon. The cost of this church was greatly reduced because of the untiring efforts of the pastor, who did much of the work himself. Because of Pastor Uhl's connection with the church in Dixon, Dr. C. B. Thummel, of Prairieville, preached in Sterling on alternate Sundays so that the people of St. John's might have preaching every Sunday.

St. John's held its organizational meeting in the old Court House in Sterling and continued to meet in the county building for several months. From 1855 to 1857, church services were held in the Presbyterian Church which faced south on E. 4th Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues at the southwest corner of the old High School property



Pastor Uhl

(now Junior High School). This was the first church to be built in Sterling, construction starting in 1848. The basement was used for several years before the building was completed in 1856. This old stone church also served as schoolhouse for the Second Ward during the 50's.

The people of St. John's early began to plan for their own house of worship. The realization of this dream was brought a little closer when on April 24, 1856 Mr. and Mrs. John W. LeFevere deeded lots 2 and 6, Block 3 of LeFevere's Addition to the congregation to be used for a church and parsonage. Led by Pastor Uhl, immediate steps were taken to build a church, and construction was started that year, with the assistance of a \$300 grant from the Church Extension Board. The debt was paid at the end of the seven-year period of the loan by George Grove and Benjamin and Isaac Reed. The exact cost of the first church is not known, but we do know that at the dedication service in April of 1857 an additional \$235.50 was subscribed. Assisting pastors at the dedication services were C. B. Thummel, C. Young and H. Knepper.

The little white frame church stood in a locust grove just east of the present church building on what is now Third Avenue, the street at that time not having been opened. There was a cemetery

just east of the church, in the Park Place area, and a few farm houses to the north. There were no sidewalks leading to the church, so carriages and wagons were driven up to the door for loading and unloading of passengers.

The first church was a plain rectangular building with a window on each side of the entrance door on the south, and four windows on the east and west sides. Just inside the entrance were the stoves and on either side of a center aisle were rows of seats. At the north end of the room stood a box-shaped pulpit on a raised platform, with a board nailed to the wall to serve as a seat for the pastor. This was a crude structure, as churches go today, but the people of St. John's were proud of their new home.

The first Communion Service of which there is a record, was held on May 20, 1855 with nine communicants present. The last Communion Service conducted by Pastor Uhl was on April 17, 1858, with 38 communicants.

Pastor Uhl records his first baptism on May 3, 1856, when Isaac Reed, son of Amos and Catherine LeFevere received this Holy Sacrement. The first confirmation is recorded April 5, 1857. On that day John Reed, Joanna Myers and Barbry Dershem took their vows. There is no record of any weddings or funerals during the tenure of Pastor



**"The Little White Church
In The Locust Grove"**

Uhl.

With the departure of Pastor Uhl in 1858, the congregation busied itself with the building of the first parsonage so that they might provide living quarters for their new pastor. This first parsonage stood on the same site as the present one and served the pastors of St. John's for almost forty years.

After leaving St. John's, Rev. Uhl lived in Dixon for many years, still taking an active part in the work of the church. Minutes of Synod for 1863 show him as pastor of the newly organized charge at Franklin Grove. He served there until 1866, during which time he used his energies to bring about the building of a Union Church which was shared by Lutherans and Presbyterians. It was dedicated on Christmas Day of 1865.

Pastor Uhl was very generous in his support of the work of the church. This was possible because he prospered in his business enterprises. He was a man of ability and held many positions of trust while a citizen of Dixon. The Synod of Northern Illinois recognized his worth by electing him to serve in several official capacities.

In 1888, he moved to Monrovia, Los Angeles County, California, where he made an effort to organize a new congregation. Later on he became identified with the First English Lutheran Church of Los Angeles, and in 1891, he was one of the charter members of the Synod of California. Rev. Uhl died in Monrovia, California on January 19, 1897.

Rev. William Uhl left behind him many monuments to his untiring efforts, as a pioneer Lutheran pastor in Illinois, in the many congregations he organized and the churches he helped to build. St. John's was indeed fortunate to have had this man as its first pastor.

REV. NATHANIEL W. LILLY **1858- -1859**

After his departure from St. John's, Rev. Uhl was called upon by the President of Synod to assist his former con-

gregation "In obtaining a suitable pastor." This he did in the person of Rev. Nathaniel Lilly.

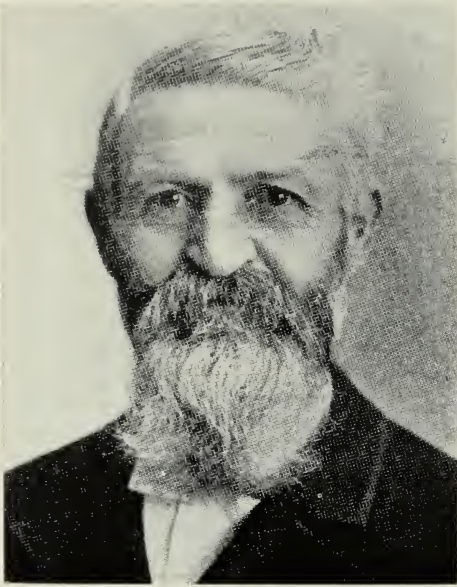
Rev. N. W. Lilly, St. John's second pastor, was born in Northumberland County, Pa., on Oct. 25, 1829. In time he was graduated from Gettysburg College and later from the Theological Department of Illinois University at Springfield, Illinois. At the meeting of Synod in 1858, at Mendota, Rev. Lilly represented St. John's of Sterling. He was ordained at this meeting of Synod, on Sept. 20th, having been highly recommended by Dr. S. W. Harkey, professor of Theology at the University. The minutes of Synod indicate that the ordination service was one filled with deep emotion, both on the part of the candidates and the brethren present.

Shortly after the arrival of Rev. Lilly in Sterling the first parsonage was completed. Pastor Lilly and his family occupied the parsonage in the fall of 1858, but his stay was short as he was granted a release to the Synod of Illinois on July 25, 1859 by President Thummel, so that he might accept a call to Mendon, Illinois.



First Parsonage

Only one Communion is recorded by Pastor Lilly, that being on Feb. 6, 1859, with 45 communicants. Eight new members were received on this date. The growth of the congregation up to the time Rev. Lilly arrived is indicated by the fact that 85 members were reported to Synod in 1858. The Church



Pastor Lilly

Register shows four baptisms, two confirmations and no weddings or funerals during his stay.

In November of 1866, Rev. Lilly was back in the territory of Northern Illinois, having accepted a call to Forreaston. After four years he moved to St. Paul's in Dixon, where he also stayed four years. From Dixon Rev. Lilly moved to Tippecanoe City, Ohio. 1892 saw him back at Forreaston for another stay of four years. At the meeting of Synod in Sterling in 1899, President Dysinger announced his release to the Kansas Synod.

Rev. Lilly died in St. Louis, Mo., April 24, 1914. At the time of his passing, one of his fellow clergymen said of him, that "He was a quiet, affable man, a faithful and strong preacher of the Word, and a kind and sympathetic pastor." Rev. Lilly was an active member of the Synod of Northern Illinois during his years of service in this area, having held several official positions, including those of Secretary and President of Synod.

REV. W. A. LIPE **1860 - 1873**

Because of the short stay of Pastor Lilly, St. John's was again, in less than a year, faced with the problem of finding a pastor. This they did in the person of Rev. Lipe, who was to lead our church through some of its early and trying years.

Wyley Archibald Lipe was born in Cabarras County, N. C. on July 9, 1835, and came with his parents to Hillsboro, Illinois that same year. After securing a preparatory education, he entered the Illinois State University at Springfield, Illinois. Here he was a classmate of Robert Lincoln, son of our Civil War President, and was a frequent visitor in the Lincoln home. One of his instructors at the University was Dr. C. B. Thummel of Prairieville, who was Professor of German and Theology in 1854-55. Student Lipe made an enviable record for himself and graduated with the highest honors in his class. During his last two years at the University he supplied pulpits in and around Springfield.

Minutes of the 10th meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois, held at Knoxville, show that on Sept. 10, 1860, W. A. Lipe was licensed to "preach the Gospel, and to perform all other ministerial acts for one year." Fifteen days later he was married to Elizabeth Brown, and to this union were born seven children. Having accepted a call to Sterling at a salary of \$60 for the first year, he arrived in our city with his bride on Oct. 10, 1860 to begin his first pastorate, which were to last for 13 years.

Pastor Lipe was ordained on Sept. 22, 1861 at the meeting of Synod in Adaline, Ogle County, Dr. C. B. Thummel preaching the ordination sermon. The Examining Committee found his sermons "well-written, sound in doctrine, well-arranged, plain, practical, and indicative of the writer's future usefulness." John Over was lay delegate from St. John's at this meeting of Synod.

Rev. Lipe conducted his first Communion in Sterling in November of 1860 with 23 communing. In 1861 Pastor Lipe organized our Sunday School and served as its first Superintendent. This organization of the church, now in its 94th year, has had a long and glorious history. In 1862 Pastor Lipe reported 50 scholdars and 10 teachers to Synod. In 1954 our Sunday School shows an enrollment of more than 600 scholars, teachers and officers. Pastor Lipe showed his interest in the work of the Sunday School at large by taking an active part in the organization of the Whiteside County Sunday School Association on Dec. 1, 1864, and served as its first Vice President.

Not long after Rev. Lipe came to Sterling, our country was plunged into a bloody civil war. In 1864 Pastor Lipe enlisted in a regiment of 100-day men and was elected Chaplain of his regiment. It was during his absence that St. John's entertained the Synod of Northern Illinois for the first time. Rev. P. Bergstresser, Secretary of Synod, closes his report of this meeting by saying that "This was one of the most delightful meetings of the kind that we have ever attended." In attendance were 22 clergymen and 7 lay delegates, including John LeFevre of St. John's.

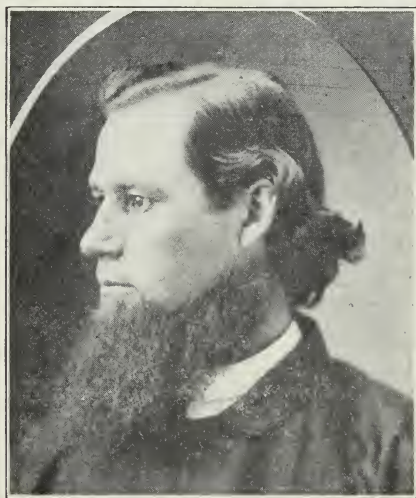
Early in 1866 the "Little White Church" was refitted and enlarged by addition of a front hall and a tower with bell, the cost being \$1800. The little church was rededicated on August 19, 1866. with Rev. A. A. Trimper of Dixon preaching the dedication sermon. Assisting were Pastor Lipe and Dr. Thummel, President of Synod. The cut of the first church as shown in this booklet pictures the church as it appeared at that time. The interior of the church was considerably changed in the remodeling and this is the church as some of our oldest members remember it. In October of 1867 St. John's was host to a called meeting of Synod.

Pastor Lipe maintained an active in-

terest in education and was elected Trustee of the Synod sponsored schools at Mendota and Springfield. In 1872 the Synod of Northern Illinois honored him with its Presidency.

From 1873 to 1880 Rev. Lipe was pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Omaha, Neb. In 1882 he was back in Illinois, having been called to the South Dixon charge, where he stayed four years. While here he suffered the loss of his wife. His next call came from Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1886, after which he held pastorates in Omaha, West Point and Ponca, Neb. In 1900 he moved to Webster City, Iowa, staying for 8 years. While here he married Mamie Auge and to this marriage was born one daughter.

With his health failing he moved to New Cambria, Kansas in 1908 where he finished his ministerial labors. On July 17, 1909, after a lingering and painful illness he was called to his Maker. The last rites of the church were performed in St. John's in Sterling, where he had held his first pastorate many years before. Rev. Fleck, pastor of St. John's, preached the funeral sermon. One of the assisting pastors was Rev. W. C. Seidel (son of St. John's). Rev. Lipe's body laid to rest in Riverside in Sterling.



Pastor Lipe

It was said of Rev. Lipe that he was a staunch Lutheran, mighty preacher, sweet singer, and a fine Christian gentleman. The great Evangelist, Dwight L. Moody once made him an attractive offer, if he would travel with him as chorus leader and solo singer. Rev. Lipe declined, preferring rather to preach and sing the Gospel for the members of his congregation. At the time of his passing, the Sterling Gazette paid him this fine tribute: "Rev. Lipe was a strong and influential preacher, and his varied service was the means of doing a work that surpasses the ability of mortal mind to compute or even enumerate."

An interesting document from the period of Pastor Lipe's tenure in St. John's is the set of RULES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE drawn up in 1865. It has been reproduced in the paragraphs that follow.

Rules Of Faith And Practice

ST. JOHN'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
STERLING, ILLINOIS

We the officers and members of the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sterling, Illinois, assembled in our house of worship on this the thirtieth day of July, and in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty Five, do adopt the following Rules of Faith and Practice.

RULES OF FAITH

1. We receive the unadulterated word of God as our only infallible rule of faith and practice.

2. We receive the Augsburg Confession as setting forth a just summary of the doctrine taught in the word of God.

SPECIFICATIONS

1. We believe in the Trinity of persons in the One Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God.

2. We believe in the universal depravity of our race.

3. We believe in the vicarious and unlimited atonement of Jesus Christ.

4. We believe in justification by faith alone.

5. We believe in the necessity of a holy life, and good works as the fruit of faith.

6. We believe in the divine appointment of the Holy Ministry and Sacraments, and that Baptism ought to be administered to children.

7. We believe in the final judgment and an eternity of rewards and punishments.

RULES OF PRACTICE

1. We receive the formula of the General Synod, laid down in our hymn books, as our Rule of Discipline and Government.

2. The Council of this church shall consist of two Elders and three Deacons. They shall be the lawful Trustees of the church.

3. This Council shall be elected tri-annually, or, once in three years.

4. No one shall be eligible to membership, either by confirmation, or baptism, who is not a Christian, or gives unmistakable evidence that he desires and is earnestly seeking to become such.

5. Persons may be received from other churches, either by letter or confession of faith.

6. The members of this church shall cheerfully acquiesce in all elections and decisions held and made according to the formula of the General Synod.

7. Each member of this church shall uphold and encourage the pastor by prayer and a Godly life.

8. Each member is recommended to attend upon the means of grace as often as practicable and pray that it may contribute to his growth in grace.

9. A member of this church shall not visit nor countenance places of public amusement—Balls, Theatres, etc. He shall not countenance nor engage in any games of chance, whatever.

10. *No member shall use nor countenance the use of intoxicating liquors in any way whatever, except as recommended by a reliable physician.*

11. *A member shall not engage, nor allow anyone to engage in unkind or abusive language toward the church, the pastor, or any member of the church, except there be sufficient evidence to establish the same before the Council.*

12. *It is expected that each member shall cherish kindly feelings toward all people, but especially those of the same faith.*

13. *Any member violating any or all of the above rules shall be subject to the discipline of the church as laid down by the General Synod.*

14. *Each and every member shall assist and sustain the Council in a strict and impartial administration of the church discipline.*

REV. EMMANUEL BROWN 1873 - 1875

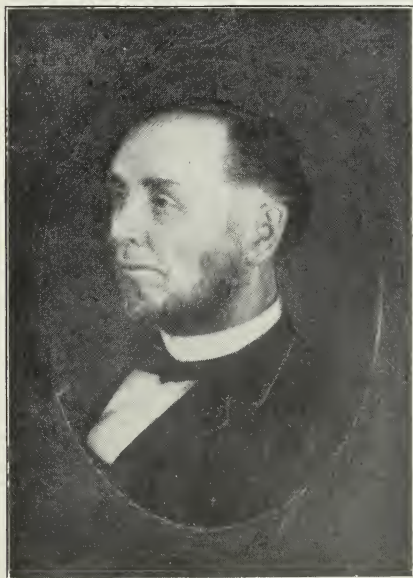
Rev. Lipe was succeeded as Pastor of St. John's by Rev. Emmanuel Brown, who served our congregation for more than a quarter of a century. Only Dr. Harris could match him in length of service. These two men were the spiritual leaders of our congregation for more than fifty of the first hundred years of her existence.

Emmanuel Brown was born near Gettysburg, Pa., Jan. 28, 1841. After completing his elementary education he received his advanced schooling at Millersville Normal School and moved to Illinois where he began his work as a school teacher. He was a successful teacher and administrator in Lena, Rochelle and Oregon for a period of ten years. During these years he was greatly interested in the work of the church and in 1866 his name appears on the minutes of Synod as a lay delegate from Oregon. At this same meeting of Synod the Committee on Examination of Candidates for the Ministry, after an interview with Mr. Brown, offered the following resolution: "Resolved, That Mr.

Brown be authorized to conduct religious meetings and to preach under the supervision of Rev. G. W. Crofts for one year, and that he be desired to pursue a course of theological study under the direction of Dr. Harkey."

Rev. Brown continued his work as an educator, at the same time pursuing his theological studies. At the meeting of Synod in Carthage in 1873 he was recommended for licensure by the Committee on Examination of Candidates for the Ministry, having "very creditably sustained an examination of various theological subjects and on personal piety." He also submitted several sermons to the committee, "which gave evidence of good Homiletical ability." Having been licensed, Rev. Brown was called to become pastor of St. John's on Oct. 7, 1873. He finished his schoolwork in Oregon on Nov. 7th, and arrived in Sterling on the 22nd of November to begin his pastoral duties.

In a personal record book kept by Pastor Brown is to be found the following statement: "My first impression



Pastor Brown

after reading the call (to St. John's) was to decline, but after prayerful consideration and consulting with the President of Synod, I concluded to accept. I notified the Council at Sterling of my decision. While writing my answer, I felt that I was writing the most important letter of my life."

St. John's acted as host for a called meeting of Synod in April of 1874. The purpose of this meeting was primarily for the purpose of examining candidates for the Ministry. At the annual meeting of Synod held in Oregon in September, Rev. Brown was ordained by that body, at the request of the Examining Committee, his "sermons and journal furnishing satisfactory evidence of his ability and fidelity in his pastoral work." Fred Eyster represented St. John's as lay delegate at this meeting.

On April 22, 1875 Rev. Brown was married to Anna Hormell of Oregon. He brought his bride to Sterling but was not to stay for long as he had been approached about returning to Oregon to teach school. He consequently tendered his resignation to the Church Council on May 5th to take effect Aug. 15th. The Council reluctantly accepted his resignation and set about finding a replacement with the assistance of Pastor Brown.

REV. A. K. FELTON

1876

Rev. Brown's decision to return to the schoolroom in 1875 again left St. John's without a pastor. Rev. J. Scherer (pioneer Lutheran pastor) was first considered, but did not accept the call. After experiencing some difficulty in filling the position the congregation finally succeeded in obtaining Rev. Anthony K. Felton.

Rev. Felton was born in Bedford County, Pa., Jan. 17, 1848. His early interests were in education and as a young man taught a country school. He later conducted a Normal School near his home. His interest in the work of the church soon led him to the decision that

he should devote his life to the Holy Gospel Ministry. With this in mind he entered Gettysburg College, graduating in 1872, and completing his study at Gettysburg Seminary in 1874.

Rev. Felton was ordained in October of 1874, in New York City, and served as pastor of a church in New Jersey for a short time before coming to Illinois as a home missionary. On Dec. 13, 1875, he accepted a call to St. John's in Sterling, beginning his pastorate on Jan. 1, 1876, but failed to stay the year out, his resignation taking effect June 14, 1876.

During his short stay the church records show one Communion with 50 present, one wedding, and one new member taken into the congregation.

He was dismissed to the Synod of Kansas that same year, and on Jan. 1, 1877 he married Amanda K. Derr. To this union were born four children. Rev. Felton was soon back in his native state, having accepted a call to Phillipsburg, Pa. From Pennsylvania he moved to Ohio, where he spent most of his years



Pastor Felton

in the ministry, holding pastorates in Pleasant City, Upper Sandusky, Lucas, Greenford, Smithville, East Union and Magnolia, his last charge. He served as Statistical Secretary for the East Ohio Synod for 13 years.

Pastor Felton's labors as a Minister of the Gospel came to a close on Feb. 2, 1915, with his passing at New Philadelphia, Ohio, after a lingering illness. It was said of him, that "as a man, he was sincere, devout, faithful; as a minister, conscientious, unselfish, and sound in the faith."

PASTOR BROWN RETURNS 1876 - 1900

With the departure of Pastor Felton, Rev. Brown was again called to serve St. John's. He accepted the call and returned after an absence of one year. This time he was to stay until his passing in 1900.

The next few years were lean years for the congregation. At one time the payments on the pastor's salary were one year in arrears. In spite of many

difficulties the pastor and congregation continued their efforts in the interest of the Kingdom. In September of 1879, St. John's was again host to the Synod of Northern Illinois.

Council Minutes tell us that the building of a new church first came up for discussion in 1881, ten years before construction started. Beginning in 1885, Pastor Brown served as President of the Synod of Northern Illinois for three successive years.

The matter of building a new church was now receiving a great deal of attention and on Oct. 5, 1886, "in response to a general call to the ladies of the congregation a meeting was held in the home of Mrs. Alex Murphy for the purpose of discussing the advisability of organizing a society for the purpose of raising funds to assist in building or buying a church." Officers elected at this first meeting were Mrs. Huldah Maynard, President; Mrs. Joseph Grubb, Vice President; Mrs. Jennie Hazard, Secretary; and Mrs. John Miller, Treas-



St. John's Second House of Worship

urer. This group, calling themselves the Ladies Aid Society, immediately set about the business of raising funds for their stated purpose and played an important part in the realization of a new church. It was during this period that the "Annual Suppers" had their beginning and proved to be one of the most important sources of revenue for the new society.

In July of 1890 the Church Council voted to present to the congregation the proposition of erecting a new church edifice. This was done and favorably received by the congregation. On Aug. 24th, 1890 a Building Committee for the new church was chosen, consisting of Herman Sturtz, John Wolfersperger, Noah S. Loux, John F. Strock, and Rev. Brown. The congregation, on Sept. 6, 1890, subscribed \$8549.00 for a new house of worship. Contracts were let and the cornerstone laid on June 16, 1891. The old church was sold to the Second Avenue (Messiah) Lutherans that summer for \$250.00. The total cost of the church was a little more than \$15,000. Dedication services were held April 10, 1892, with Dr. S. B. Barnitz, Western Secretary of the Board of Home Missions, preaching the sermon. St. John's was once more host to the Synod of Northern Illinois that year.

The Ladies Aid Society, having achieved its goal in assisting in the erection of the new church, now set its sights upon the building of a new par-

sonage. This hard-working group of women not only raised the funds for this new project but took an active part in the drafting of the plans for it. The old parsonage was sold in 1897 to Mrs. Jennie Hazard who had it moved to its present location on the southeast corner of Johnson Avenue and E. Tenth Street. The new parsonage was finished in November at a cost of \$3,000.00.

The Synod of Northern Illinois held its 49th annual meeting in Sterling in 1899, beginning Oct. 25th. This meeting of Synod, at which Pastor Brown acted as host, was to be his last as six months later he was no longer in the land of the living, having been suddenly called to his final reward on April 13th, 1900. The passing of Rev. Brown was a terrible shock to his wife and children, Florence (Mrs. Fred Clark) and Paul, as well as the congregation and the community as a whole. The end came suddenly and with little warning on Good Friday.

Rev. Frank A. Miller, an Evangelist of the Congregational Church, who had been assisting with some special Easter services took over for Pastor Brown and inspired the congregation to dispose of the balance of the debt on the church before they laid their pastor away on Easter Monday. The efforts of Pastor Brown during his last days were evident in the 81 new members who joined the church on that sad Easter Sunday.

People from all walks of life attended the funeral of this beloved pastor of St. John's and the community at large. Rev. J. M. Ruthrauff, President of Carthage College, preached the funeral sermon. Assisting in the services were a host of pastors from Synod and the local community. The church could not hold all who wished to attend, hundreds turning away or standing outside. Delegations were present from many local organizations and institutions that Rev. Brown had served during his years in Sterling.

At the time of his passing he was serving the congregations at Emerson and



Second Parsonage

Prairieville, as well as St. John's. He was also President of the Board of Directors of Carthage College, and President of the Board of Education of the newly formed Sterling Township High School. For years he had served as President of the Board of Education of the Second Ward School (Central), relinquishing this office so that he might take an active part in the organization of the new high school.

Many honors were heaped upon Rev. Brown during his lifetime by his church, the Synod of Northern Illinois, and the local community. At the time of his passing he was further honored with many tributes of praise. The Synod of Northern Illinois recognized his passing by resolution which in part said: "In Brother Brown, as we familiarly called him, we recognize a brother of unusual ability as a preacher of the Word, a splendid organizer, a wise and safe counselor, a true and devoted friend . . . in short, his worth and work as a minister of God, a member of Synod, and a brother man, make his memory an inspiration and his life and character a shining example." Among other things Dr. Ruthrauff, President of Carthage College said of him, "He had profound convictions on all important questions that concerned the church, the state and home, and he had the courage of his convictions." The Twin Cities Ministerial Association and The Sterling Gazette both recognized him as an outstanding citizen and a man of God.

REV. E. LEE FLECK

1900 - 1909

In July of 1900, St. John's issued a call to Rev. E. Lee Fleck of the Second Lutheran Church of Dayton, Ohio, to fill the vacancy created by the death of Pastor Brown. The call was accepted, Rev. Fleck taking up his pastoral duties in Sterling on September 1, of that year.

Rev. Fleck was born in Sinking Valley, Pa., Sept. 8, 1856. Here he received his elementary school education. After finishing his high school work at Clarence,

Iowa he entered Carthage College, graduating in 1884. He immediately entered Wittenberg Theological Seminary, from which he received his divinity degree in 1887.

On March 7, 1888 he married a college classmate, Miss Olive Hosford of Hamilton, Ill., and to this union were born five children, Vera, Harlow, Irene, Donald, and Elmer.

His first parastorate was the Third Lutheran Church of Springfield, Ohio which he organized; the new congregation under his leadership building a church the first year. Pastorates in Sidney, Neb., and Dayton, Ohio followed before Rev. Fleck came to Sterling. Here he stayed for nine years and during that time there was a decided increase in the membership and a number of improvements were made to the physical properties of the church.

In 1902 and 1903 the entire church was redecorated and improved, an important addition in 1902 being a water motor for pumping the organ. Early in 1904 it was decided that a new pipe or-



Pastor Fleck

gan should be purchased and installed in time for the 50th Anniversary celebration in December. This was done and the instrument dedicated during the anniversary week, but not without many anxious moments as the organ was much delayed in its arrival and not completely installed until the final service.

St. John's Golden Anniversary was celebrated from Dec. 18th to 23rd with many local and visiting pastors taking part. Rev. W. A. Lipe who served St. John's during the Civil War period, returned and recalled for the congregation some of the early days in the life of the church. Benjamin and Harriet Reed, charter members of the church, and still active, were present to help celebrate this very special occasion.

In 1906 the church was recarpeted throughout and also in that year appeared the first church paper, entitled "Our Daily Work." 1906 was the year of "The Great Ice Gorge." There was much damage to property and all of the Avenue G Bridge was carried away by the ice. Many people were thrown out of work

because of power failures in the factories. Luckily no lives were lost. Special services of Thanksgiving were held in the churches when the channel of the river was finally cleared.

Pastor Fleck brought his work in Sterling to a close in August of 1909. From Sterling he moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where he engaged in supply work for many years.

Rev. Fleck was on the roll of the Nebraska Synod at the time of his death. The end of his pastoral labors came on May 18, 1937 at Lincoln, Neb. He was buried at Hamilton, Illinois.

Rev. Fleck was a man of high principles and a firm believer in these principles. He was not a man to be swayed from what he believed to be right. On the occasion of St. John's Golden Anniversary the Sterling Gazette had this to say of Rev. Fleck's ministry: "He has worked hard and to good effect, and the satisfactory consummation of his plans is an excellent testimonial to the effect that he is the right man in the right place."



Benjamin Reed



Harriet Reed

REV. E. C. HARRIS, D. D.
1909 - 1935

With the arrival of Rev. E. C. Harris on Oct. 17, 1909, began one of the most outstanding pastorates of any pastor who has served in Sterling. Like St. John's beloved Pastor Brown, Dr. Harris was to endear himself to the people of his congregation and the city as a whole.

Edwin C. Harris was born near Oxford, Ohio on July 19, 1840. After attending the Public Schools he received his early advanced education at Miami University and National Normal University in Ohio. After teaching in the Public Schools for one year he enrolled at Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio, graduating in the class of 1896. He immediately entered the Hamma Divinity School, graduating in 1899. During his Seminary years he supplied churches in Xenia and Dayton, Ohio and Middletown, Indiana.

On Sept. 21, 1899, Rev. Harris was united in marriage to Anna Magdalene Snyder, a native of Whiteside County, whose family had moved to Ohio. The young couple, having been commissioned by the Board of Foreign Missions as Missionaries to India, sailed from Philadelphia Nov. 4, 1899 for Guntur, India, a trip of 13,000 miles, arriving seven weeks later.

Rev. and Mrs. Harris stayed in India for 8½ years. The story of their labors in India, because of space, cannot be told here. However, to quote a report in the Minutes of Illinois Synod, it may be said "they labored faithfully and successfully."

Daughters Margery (Mrs. William Nelson) and Kathleen (Mrs. Donald Ball) were born in India. Lloyd was born in Sterling. Because of the poor health of Mrs. Harris the family was forced to return to this country. For about one year Rev. Harris served the Board of Foreign Missions as representative at various synodical meetings.

In August, 1909 Rev. Harris participated in the Bible Conference in con-



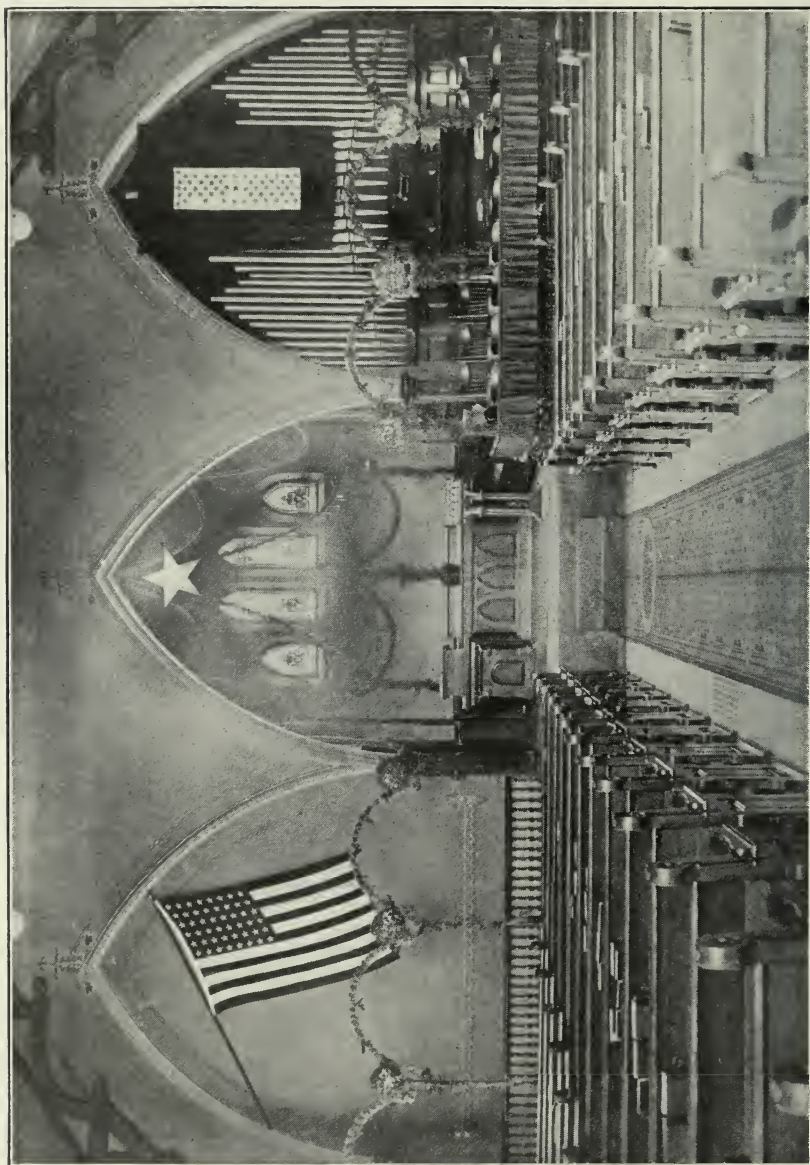
Pastor Harris

nection with the Rock River Assembly in Dixon. He was invited to visit St. John's, which he did, and on Sept. 20, 1909 received a unanimous call from the congregation to be its pastor. The call was accepted and Pastor Harris and family arrived on Oct. 17, 1909. This was Rev. Harris' only pastorate in this country.

Installation services for Pastor Harris were held Dec. 5, 1909 with our own Dr. W. C. Seidel delivering the charge to the pastor and Rev. Thos. B. Hersch, a classmate of the pastor and President of the Synod of Northern Illinois, the charge to the congregation.

Under the leadership of Pastor Harris the congregation took under consideration the matter of supporting a Missionary Pastor at the Annual Meeting in January of 1911. That same year, in October, St. John's was host to the 61st Annual Meeting of The Synod of Northern Illinois.

On June 21, 1914, Rev. Harry E. Dickey was installed as Missionary Pastor from St. John's. This was the be-



Interior of Second Church During World War I

ginning of a fine missionary project that lasted until 1931.

From 1912 to 1917 a number of decorating and maintenance projects were carried out by the congregation and its various auxiliaries. One very noticeable change was the addition of an altar and new altar furniture. This altar furniture is still in use at the Elmhurst Lutheran Church being moved here when the present sanctuary was completed in 1924.

The Synod of Northern Illinois honored Pastor Harris with its Presidency in 1915 and again in 1916. Rev. Harris was again honored in 1918 by his alma mater when he had conferred upon him the Doctor of Divinity degree, for outstanding service in his field.

1917 saw the purchase of the Gould property just west of the church (where the present auditorium stands) at a cost of \$4,000. There was now a great deal of talk about the necessity of expanding the facilities of the church, and in 1918 a Building Fund was started.

In 1919 the Church Council was increased from seven to nine members, consisting of four Elders and five Deacons. The following year the congregation elected an "Investigating Committee" to look into the matter of enlarging the church. Serving on this committee were Theodore Trouth, Lewis Reitzel, Jonas Baer, Gustave Fritz and Hugo Weyrauch.

After considerable study the congregation decided to proceed with a program to enlarge the physical facilities and on April 13, 1921 created two committees to carry out its wishes. The Building Committee was composed of G. E. Bishop (Chmn.), Mrs. Minnie Anderson (Sec.), Theodore Trouth, Otto Leitz, Hugo Weyrauch, Henry Grebner and Mrs. Ida LeFevre. The Finance Committee included Nevin R. Loux (Chmn.), Miss Helen Hamm (Sec.), Miss Jennie Linn (Treas.), Charles A. Smith, M. E. Wilger and Harry R. Trudo.

Ground breaking services for the new church were held April 19, 1923. Noah

S. Loux, only surviving member of the building committee of the church built in 1891, turned the first shovel of dirt. The corner-stone was laid on July 1, 1923, and the completed church was dedicated April 27, 1924.

It was a great day for the people of St. John's and was observed with week-long services, many visiting church dignitaries taking part in the celebration. The cost of this fine new temple of worship was about \$120,000 and was completely paid for in five years.

One of the most enjoyed features of the new church was the magnificent new Moller organ. This fine instrument was a gift from Mrs. Clara S. Martin in memory of her father-in-law, John Martin. The old pipe organ was sold to the First Congregational Church in Rock Falls and is still in use today.

At a special congregational meeting in March 1926, Theodore Trouth, Sr. was elected Assistant to the Pastor, a position which he held for five years. It was in October of 1926 that the congregation was shocked by the sudden passing of Rev. Dickey, Missionary Pastor from St. John's to India. He had served for 12 years in the field, his only assignment being in the name of St. John's. The following year Rev. S. C. Burger was appointed Missionary Pastor from St. John's and continued to serve until 1931. Rev. Burger was an active missionary in India when the Harris' were there.

A week of special services were held from Dec. 1 to 8, 1929, to celebrate St. John's Diamond Jubilee. It was a happy 75th anniversary. St. John's had grown to be one of the largest congregations in the Illinois Synod and had made an enviable record in support of the benevolent programs of the church. A new house of worship had been completed five years earlier and on this occasion the congregation found itself debt free.

The depression years in the 30's were rough on St. John's as they were on everyone. Dr. Harris, as one might have



The New Sanctuary — 1924

expected from him asked that the congregation cut his salary in an attempt to alleviate financial conditions. Other employees of the church followed his example and also took cuts.

Although there was a depression in terms of money, there was no depression in the activity and growth in our congregation. The burden on Dr. Harris was becoming too great and so it was, after consideration by the Church Council and the congregation, that Student Albert H. Keck, Jr., of Maywood Seminary was called to be Assistant Pastor at St. John's. He served St. John's on a part-time basis from Sept. 1933 until his graduation from the Seminary in May, 1934.

Rev. Keck was made Associate Pastor June 1, 1934, with the thought of further relieving Dr. Harris. A continued decline in his health, however, caused

him to resign as Pastor of St. John's in January of 1935. Dr. Harris' resignation was accepted and he was made Pastor Emeritus as of May 1, 1935.

Rev. Keck was issued a call to become Pastor of St. John's as of May 1, 1935. This call was accepted and Rev. Keck installed.

A complete breakdown in the health of Dr. Harris soon followed, and after an illness which lasted for more than six years, he was called to his Master on Oct. 17, 1942, exactly 33 years from the day he took up his duties in Sterling.

The people of St. John's and the community at large paid their final respects to this great and dearly loved man in services held in the church he had loved so dearly, and for which he had given so many years of his life. Rev. Albert H. Keck, Jr., Pastor of St. John's, conducted the services, assisted by Dr. Lloyd W.

Walter of Dixon and Dr. Thomas B. Hersch, a classmate of Dr. Harris, who preached the sermon. A large delegation of clergy from Synod and the community attended in a body. Hundreds of the friends of Dr. Harris had filed by his remains as they lay in state from Sunday afternoon until the time of the funeral on Monday. Following services in Sterling, the body was taken to Darrtown, Ohio for burial, the services there being conducted by Rev. James Miller of Dayton, Ohio, on Oct. 21, 1942.

The expressions of tribute to this saintly man would fill many pages of this little book. A few chosen at random will tell in what high esteem Dr. Harris was held by all who knew him.

"Dr. Harris was a diligent worker, a good organizer, an able leader. But above all else he was a true pastor, loved and esteemed for his understanding, gracious sympathy and living faith. He served everyone in one spirit—that of his Master. He was in constant touch with his people and rejoiced with them when they rejoiced, and wept with them when they were in sorrow. He was often in their homes and wrote many cherished letters. The whole community regarded him as one of God's saints and many hundreds in the community counted him their pastor and servant though they were unchurched. He served them without counting the cost. He was truly blessed of God in a beautiful personality without weakness, and in his passion for the aid and salvation of his brethren."

The Sterling Daily Gazette expressed the feelings of the community in an editorial, part of which follows: "He moved among us smilingly, bringing cheer to the afflicted, advising the young, cheering us in our everyday tasks. He never entered a home without bringing with him a feeling of friendship and a desire for a better life; he never left a home without leaving behind him a happy thought. If ever a man taught the Gospel by precept and example, that man was Dr. E. C. Harris. This community

has been enriched because of his having lived among us."

It was the privilege of this writer to have known Dr. Harris and to have called him Pastor. Nothing that has been said of him in eulogy was undeserved. We should like to add another credit to this good man. His complete and well-kept records of the church have made the work of your centennial historian much easier than it could otherwise have been. His great interest in the early history of our congregation, and the many booklets which resulted from his research have preserved for our church, information that would be beyond our reach at this time.

REV. ALBERT H. KECK, JR. 1935 - 1945

With the continued growth of St. John's during the pastorate of Dr. Harris, it became very evident that it was a physical impossibility for one man to serve a congregation so large. A step toward relieving Dr. Harris was taken in 1933 when Albert H. Keck, Jr., then a student at Maywood Theological Seminary, was called as Assistant Pastor. This was the beginning of an association between Rev. Keck and St. John's that was to last for nearly twelve years.

Albert H. Keck, Jr., son of Dr. and Mrs. Albert H. Keck, Sr., was born in Aurora, Illinois, March 23, 1910. Dr. Keck has been an outstanding minister in the ULCA for many years, serving at present as Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Richmond, Indiana.

Albert H. Keck, Jr. attended the public schools of South Bend, Ind. and graduated from Central High School in 1927. After his graduation from Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio in 1931, he attended Hamma Divinity School for two years. He was graduated from the Chicago Lutheran Seminary at Maywood, Illinois in May of 1934. His ordination took place at South Bend, Ind., on May 15th of that same year. As has already been mentioned, Rev. Keck served as assistant to Dr. Harris until his graduation



Pastor Keck

from Seminary, at which time he became Associate Pastor of St. John's.

On Aug. 15, 1934, Rev. Keck was united in marriage to Virginia Elizabeth Rhodes, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. George H. Rhodes. Dr. Rhodes has for many years been associated with the Lutheran church in North Carolina. To this marriage has been born four children: George Albert, David Rhodes, Timothy Alan and Barbara Jane. All but Barbara Jane were born in Sterling.

During Rev. Keck's first full year in Sterling, St. John's was host to the Synodical Convention of the Women's Missionary Society.

After the resignation of Dr. Harris in 1935 because of ill health, he was elected Pastor Emeritus and Rev. Keck was called to be Pastor. This change became effective as of May 1, 1935. Seldom has so young a man been called to serve so large a congregation. Rev. Keck, however, was equal to the challenge and completely justified the people of St. John's in their choice of pastor.

Early in 1935, was organized the Social Gardeners, a group that has for

years been responsible for the altar flowers and other floral decorations in the church. An important event in 1936 was the adoption of the Revised Constitution and By-Laws of our congregation. It was shortly after this that the congregation was presented with a fine grand piano for the sanctuary, a memorial to Theodore Trough, Jr.

St. John's was the host to the annual meeting of the Illinois Synod, May 16-19, 1938. This was the second time the Illinois Synod had met in Sterling, the previous meeting having been held in 1925. Discussion of extensive alterations and renovation in the Sunday School came up for discussion at this time, leading to an 85th Anniversary Appeal for \$2500.

In 1939 all the brickwork was repointed and the outside woodwork painted, which did much to improve the outside appearance of the church. Rev. Keck prepared and published a special historical booklet and church directory in connection with St. John's 85th anniversary. Special services were held in honor of the occasion, and on Sunday, Dec. 3, the birthday of our congregation, Dr. Armin G. Weng, President of Illinois Synod, preached the anniversary sermon. The Young Married People's Group was organized in 1939.

St. John's Luther League acted as host to the State Convention of Luther Leagues of Illinois Synod in August of 1940. This was a great occasion for the young people of our church and brought many fine Leaguers to our midst from all parts of the state.

Extensive repairs and alterations were made to the parsonage in 1941 and 1942. Again there was talk of having an assistant to the pastor. Late in 1941 the Grebner family presented a set of chimes, a very fine addition to our organ.

Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, was the occasion of the attack on Pearl Harbor and led to our involvement in World War II. Many of our fine young men and women

were called into the service of their country in the next few years. Pastor Keck and the Luther League did a fine job of keeping in touch with those who were in the service.

In 1942, the congregation voted to increase the Church Council to four Elders and eight Deacons, besides the Pastor, which number still applies. The big Seminary Drive which had been postponed during the depression years was launched in 1942, with St. John's raising \$5423. In March of that year the congregation voted to secure an assistant for the pastor and in time called George Hershberger, a student at Gettysburg Seminary. He took up his duties in June of 1942.

A 2-year catechetical course was started by Pastor Keck in 1942. This was also the year that the Council voted to send the Gleaner to the members of the congregation. On Oct. 17, 1942, occurred the death of our beloved Dr. Harris, his sufferings on this earth having been brought to a merciful end.

The first parish secretary was employed in 1943, to relieve the pastor of clerical work. This year also saw the realization of the Dr. E. C. Harris Endowment Fund to help educate native missionaries. This fund has continued and has been added to from time to time.

Pastor Keck began publishing the St. John's Messenger in 1944, a church paper that appeared several times a year. The Erva Moody Missionary Society came into being that year.

The much delayed Carthage College Drive was launched in 1945. Our Synod-sponsored school at Carthage had suffered severely during the depression and now all the churches in the Synod were being given a chance to help Carthage get back on its feet. St. John's raised \$3994 as its apportioned share in this project.

Sunday, May 6, 1945, was a sad day for our congregation for on that day at the close of the morning service, Pastor

Keck read his resignation as Pastor of St. John's, to take effect June 24. The congregation very reluctantly accepted the resignation and set about looking for a new pastor.

Rev. Keck left St. John's to accept a call to Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Lincolnton, N. C., where he stayed three years. In 1948, he was elected Professor of Practical Theology at Lutheran South-ein Seminary. Here he stayed until 1953 when he accepted a call to St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Hickory, N. C., where he is now located.

Rev. Keck has already been honored many times by Synod and the U.L.C.A. He has served as Secretary of the Board of Chicago Lutheran Seminary; Chairman of the Illinois Synod Stewardship Committee; Chairman of Long Lake Summer School Board; Home Mission Board of N. C. Synod; Committee on Ministerial Education of N. C. Synod; member of U.L.C.A. Committee on Worship; delegate to U.L.C.A. in 1938, 1944, 1952 and 1954. He was the writer of a quarter of U.L.C.A. 1954 Lesson Commentary, and has contributed to "The Lutheran," "The Lutheran Quarterly," and "Luther League Topics."

Rev. Albert H. Keck, Jr., though still a young man, has had a fine record as a Minister of the Gospel. We, who have known him intimately, have expected great things of him and feel that many more honors will come to him before his pastoral work is finished. We of St. John's still follow with much interest the doings of "Pastor Keck." Our best wishes go out to him and his fine family. It is with great joy that we look forward to his return during our centennial celebration.

REV. ALFRED L. GREWE, D. D. 1945 -

After Rev. Keck's departure, several ministers filled the pulpit during the summer, with the result that the congregation voted to call Dr. Alfred L. Grewe, Pastor of Faith Church in St. Louis, Mo. Alfred Louis Grewe was born April

17, 1897 in Okawville, Washington County, Ill., the son of Fred and Minnie (Budde) Grewe. He attended the public and parochial schools of Okawville and graduated from Concordia College, Ft. Wayne, Ind., in June of 1916. Graduation from Concordia Seminary at St. Louis came in June 1919.

Rev. Grewe was ordained at Bethlehem Lutheran Church (his home church) St. Louis, Mo., on Aug. 17, 1919. His first call came from Twin Bridges, Montana, where he was installed Aug. 31, 1919. Churches at Sheridan and Dillon, Montana were also included in this parish. The young pastor was housed in a pioneer type log cabin when he first arrived. Rev. Grewe's stay in Montana lasted less than a year as the inhabitants of his parish were rapidly leaving this community for other localities.

Being left without a congregation, Rev. Grewe accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Booneville, Mo., and was installed June 13, 1920. Here he stayed for almost six years, also serving as student Pastor at Missouri University at Columbia for three years.

Rev. Grewe was married to Effie M. Chapline on Jan. 22, 1922. This union has been blessed with two daughters, Mrs. Raymond (Lois) Snyder of Los Angeles, Calif., and Mrs. James (Carmen) Haskell of Sterling.

On Feb. 28, 1926, Rev. Grewe helped to organize Faith Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Mo. That first service was attended by 51 men, women and children. Under the able leadership of Pastor Grewe, Faith Church grew until at the time of his leaving in 1945, the baptized membership numbered nearly 1200.

His outstanding work as a Minister of the Gospel was recognized by Carthage College, when on June 9, 1941, he had conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Dr. Grewe was called to St. John's in 1945, and assumed his duties with this congregation on Sept. 17th, his installation taking place Sept. 28, 1945, with

Dr. Armin Weng, President of Illinois Synod, preaching the sermon and assisted by Rev. George J. Curran of Dixon.

Shortly after Dr. Grewe's arrival, the long delayed remodeling program was started. Much of the preparatory work had been done before Rev. Keck left Sterling. Pledges totaling more than \$32,000 had been received early in 1946. Work was started this year and continued for the next two years.

The sanctuary was completely redecorated and treated with an acoustical ceiling. New light fixtures were hung and the lighting of the chancel greatly improved. The chancel steps were widened and the floor recarpeted throughout the auditorium. The organ console was moved to the east transept and screens placed in front of east and west transept and front pews.

The Sunday School departments were redecorated and fitted with new light fixtures. New church offices were built in the Senior Sunday School department and were completely outfitted with new furniture. The Beginners' Department was enlarged and a new east entrance replaced the old steps that led up to the Senior Sunday School department. This new entrance also leads to the Primary and Beginners' Departments. The boiler room and heating plant received considerable attention and all wiring in the church was replaced and housed in conduit. The cost of all this work totalled nearly \$40,000, covered in part by pledges and partly by bequests.

In 1947, the John C. Haberer Memorial Harp was added to the organ. The following year new offering plates were presented to the church as a memorial to G. A. Fritz, and in 1949, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Linton made a gift of a beautiful new communion set. About this time new robes were provided for the choirs.

In 1949 and 1950 the parsonage was repaired and painted, and asphalt tile was placed on the floor of the north Sunday School room. 1950 saw the arrival of the Legzdins family, deportees



Chancel — Christmas, 1948

from Latvia, one of many Lutheran families from Europe who were sponsored by congregations in this country. This same year the kitchen in the church was given a complete overhauling and is now one of the most modern to be found in Sterling.

The Council began discussions in regard to securing an assistant for the pastor in 1950, and at the Annual Meeting in January 1951, the congregation voted to call a seminary student for a

year's internship. The arrival of Student Fritz Treptow in June 1951, was the beginning of an arrangement with Capitol Seminary of Columbus, Ohio, which has brought us a student interne each year.

St. John's Women's Missionary Society was host to the State Biennial Convention of the Women's Missionary Society late in 1951. Just before this convention a new flexotile floor was laid in the basement social rooms.

Student John Holman arrived in June

1952, to serve as interne and was followed in 1953 by Student W. Howard Ward.

Plans for St. John's Centennial Anniversary in December 1954, got underway early in 1953. This year also saw the establishment of a Ministerial Scholarship Fund. This fund is available to young men of St. John's who are preparing for the Lutheran Ministry. To qualify, they must have completed their Junior year in College.

At a called meeting of the congregation on November 29, 1953, the people of St. John's voted to raise a Centennial Anniversary Fund of \$12,000, to be used for the improvement of church properties. This program called for the redecoration of the sanctuary, new floors and tiled walls in the Beginners' and Primary Departments of the Sunday School, and redecoration of all Sunday School Departments.

The interior of the parsonage was redecorated in 1954 and the Anniversary improvement program will be completed when St. John's celebrates her 100th birthday.

Student George Hartman started his internship in June of 1954, and continues the very fine relationship that exists between St. John's and these young seminary students.

The tremendous program of improvements that has been carried out in our church in the past eight years has taken much time and money on the part of the individual members of the congregation and the auxiliary organizations as well. One might even wonder if there has been time for anything else.

While all of this material growth has been going on, the spiritual side of the life of St. John's has not been neglected.

The congregation has grown until the baptized membership numbers close to 2000, and attendance and participation in church activities has increased.

For more than a year, there have been two services each Sunday morning with the result that total attendance has increased about 20%. Dr. Grewe has striven for several years to bring this increase about, and must be pleased with the substantial gains that have been made.

The work of our Stewardship and Evangelism Committees has been very encouraging to Pastor and congregation. With the continued cooperative efforts of Pastor and congregation, St. John's can look forward to even greater accomplishments in the future.

Dr. Grewe has, through the years, served the Synod and the U.L.C.A. in many capacities. These, in part, include the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension; Board of Ministerial Education; Board of Directors of the Nachusa Home for Children; Board of Directors of the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary; Social Mission Committee; Stewardship Committee; Examining Committee; Lutheran Commission on Evangelism of the National Lutheran Council. Dr. Grewe has also taken leadership in worthy local projects, such as Red Cross and Community Chest.

We have been brought up to date in our story of the first hundred years in the life of St. John's. From this point on, Pastor and congregation will be building history, that it will fall to others to record. Let us hope and pray on our Centennial Anniversary that future generations will look with favor upon our accomplishments.

Assistants To The Pastor

The need for an assistant to the pastor to help him in caring for a congregation as large as St. John's was recognized by the congregation in the mid-twenties. So it was that on March 8, 1926, a

special meeting of the Church Council was called with the officers of the Ladies' Social Circle present. The ladies brought from their organization the recommendation that Pastor Harris be provided

with an assistant to help him in his work.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that a Congregational Meeting should be called and that three propositions should be presented. (1) Pastor Harris should be provided with an assistant. (2) Theodore Trouth, Sr. be recommended for the position. (3) The salary for such a position shall be \$600 per year.

These recommendations of the Council to the Congregation were presented at a meeting called on March 28, 1926, and were duly adopted. Mr. Trouth accepted the position and served until 1931, requesting that his salary be placed in the Building Fund.

So it was that the first Pastor's assistant was installed more than twenty years ago. Mr. Trouth spent much of his time in visiting the sick and making calls on the members of the congregation. He also assisted the pastor in the administration of The Holy Communion.

From 1931 to 1933, Dr. Harris again tried to carry on his super-human task of visiting his large congregation besides looking after all his other responsibilities. It was too much for a conscientious man like Dr. Harris. Consequently, a Congregational Meeting was called on Sept. 29, 1933, at which time it was voted to call Student Albert H. Keck, Jr., of the Maywood Seminary to become Assistant Pastor. Until his graduation, he was to spend his weekends in Sterling, taking charge of the Luther League, the Catechetical Class and preaching one sermon each Sunday.

After his ordination in May of 1934, Rev. Keck became a full-time assistant, and before a year had passed, had been made, first, Associate Pastor, and later Pastor of St. John's.

After Dr. Harris' retirement, Rev. Keck carried on alone until 1942. The matter of having an assistant for the pastor having received considerable thought and study the previous year, it was decided to call a student interne for one year.

George M. Hershberger, a student at Gettysburg Theological Seminary, arrived in Sterling in June 1942, and stayed one year. Student Hershberger spent much of his time in visiting the sick and other members of the congregation. He also spent a portion of his time in the interests of the young people of the church. Other duties included preaching on occasions during the year, and assisting the pastor in the conducting of the Sunday morning worship.

After the departure of Student Hershberger, a period of eight years was to elapse before another interne was called to assist the pastor. During these intervening years, part-time and finally full-time secretarial help was furnished the pastor.

In June of 1951, began a period of internships by seminary students that has continued until the present time, and is proving quite satisfactory. The duties of these internes have remained much the same as they were for Mr. Hershberger.

In the paragraphs that follow, a short biographical sketch of each of these assistants to the pastor will be given. Some of these young men are now located in pastorates of their own, and it is certain that with each one of them goes the very best wishes of St. John's as they continue in their chosen work, the Holy Gospel Ministry.

Theodore Trouth, Sr.

Theodore Trouth, son of Engelhardt and Anna Trouth, was born on a farm in Jordan Township, March 1, 1861. At the age of 22, he set out for himself and proved to be a very successful farmer. Dec. 30, 1884, he married Elizabeth Miller and to them were born three children, Anna, Florence (Tuckerman) and Theodore, Jr. Only Mrs. Tuckerman still survives.

For some years Mr. Trouth conducted a farm implement store in Sterling, and later a furniture and funeral parlor with his son. During these years in Sterling, Mr. Trouth was a devoted member of



Theodore Trough, Sr.



George Hershberger



Henry F. Treptow



John Holman



W. Howard Ward



George Hartman

St. John's, serving on the church Council and taking an active part in the work of the church. It is therefore not surprising that, in looking for a good Christian layman to assist the pastor, the congregation chose Mr. Trouth. It can truly be said that a very useful and fine Christian life was brought to a close with Mr. Trouth's passing on Feb. 19, 1940.

George M. Hershberger

George Madison Hershberger was born in McGrann, Pa., Nov. 17, 1916, the son of Russell and Cornelia Hershberger. After graduation from the public schools of Ford City, Pa., he entered Thiel College at Greenville, Pa., receiving his A. B. degree in 1940. Mr. Hershberger received his seminary training at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa., graduating in 1944 with a B. D. degree, having interned for one year (1942-1943) here in Sterling at St. John's.

Rev. Hershberger was ordained in May of 1944 by the Pittsburg Synod, and was immediately called to Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Kensington, Pa. He stayed there until Dec., 1947.

It was at the close of his year of internship in Sterling that Rev. Hershberger was married to Eleanor B. Kornman. This marriage has been blessed with two children, Carol Lee and George Richard.

From Jan. 1948 to Sept. 1951, Rev. Hershberger served St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church at DuBois, Pa. On Sept. 18, 1951 he was commissioned Chaplain in the United States Navy and enrolled in the Chaplain's School, Newport, R. I. Dec. 1951 to July 1952 was spent at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S. C. The next two years were spent with Destroyer Squadron ELEVEN, Pacific Fleet. Chaplain Hershberger has been stationed at the Naval Training Center at San Diego, Calif., since October of this year.

Henry F. Treptow

Henry F. Treptow, son of Henry and

Edna Treptow, was born in Hallettsville, Texas, April 7, 1928. After graduation from Hallettsville High School in 1945, he attended Texas Lutheran College, Seguin, Texas and Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, graduating from the former in 1949. Mr. Treptow was graduated from the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary of Capitol University, Columbus, Ohio with a B. D. degree on May 31, 1953. It was during this seminary training that Mr. Treptow spent a year as student interne in St. John's in Sterling, his period of service dating from June 1951 to June 1952.

On July 26, 1953, Henry F. Treptow was ordained a Minister of the Gospel in St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Hallettsville, Texas. Rev. Treptow took over the work as pastor of Grace and Immanuel Lutheran Churches, Slaton, Texas as of Aug. 1, 1953 and serves there at the present time.

Rev. Treptow was married to Marilyn Henzler of Toledo, Ohio on May 30, 1953. Rev. and Mrs. Treptow are the proud parents of a fine son, Carl Edward, born in September of this year.

Rev. Treptow or "Fritz" as we lovingly think of him plans to pursue post-graduate study in theology at Chicago Lutheran Seminary at Maywood, Illinois.

John N. Holman

John N. Holman was born June 16, 1928 in Norwalk, Ohio, the son of Dr. and Mrs. M. E. Holman. After graduation from Norwalk High School in 1942, John Holman entered Capitol University, Columbus, Ohio and was graduated with an A.B. Degree in 1950. Seminary training at Capitol University followed, with a year's internship at St. John's (1952-53) coming before his senior year. Mr. Holman received his divinity degree on June 6, 1954.

Rev. Holman's ordination took place at St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church in Norwalk, June 27, 1954. He was called to Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Wilmington, Del. as Assistant Pastor, and was installed on July 18, of this year.

William H. Ward

William Howard Ward, Jr., was born Feb. 13, 1930 in Baltimore, Maryland, the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Ward, Sr. After graduation from the public schools of Baltimore in 1947, came four years of college work at Capitol University, Columbus, Ohio. College graduation in 1951 was followed by seminary work at Capitol University.

After two years of seminary training Howard spent his year of internship with us here at St. John's. He made many friends while with us and we are wishing him well in this his last year in the seminary. We do not know where Howard's first call will come from, but we do know he will be well received and will make many friends in his first pastorate.

George A. Hartman, Jr.

George A. Hartman, Jr., was born Sept. 27, 1931 at Lancaster, Ohio, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. A. Hartman, Sr. George's father has been a school teacher for many years and at present is Supt. of Schools, Circleville, Ohio.

George lived in several places in Ohio while getting his public school education and graduated from high school in Carey, Ohio in 1949. Next came college work at Capitol University in Columbus, Ohio with graduation in 1953.

After one year at Capitol Seminary, George came to Sterling in June of this year and is spending his year of internship here at St. John's. George is doing an outstanding job and we are all looking for great things to come from him.

Missionary Pastors

Pastor Harris' great interest in foreign missions never left him, and in St. John's he found a congregation that was willing to take steps to support this great work in the Kingdom of God.

At the Annual Congregation Meeting held Jan. 5, 1911, the congregation resolved to support a Missionary Pastor in India. Action was deferred for a time, but at the Annual Meeting on Jan. 3, 1913 the congregation voted to support a Missionary Pastor in India for eight years at \$750 a year.

More than a year was to elapse before the Board of Foreign Missions could secure a man. On Jan. 22, 1914, Rev. Harry E. Dickey of Richmond, Ind. was commissioned as "The Missionary Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Sterling, Illinois."

Rev. Harry E. Dickey Missionary Pastor 1914 - 1926

Harry Elverton Dickey was born near Richmond, Ind., April 8, 1885, the son of Harry and May Dickey. The influence of a good Christian home, and the spiritual guidance of his pastor, led him to

enter Wittenberg College. He graduated in 1911, and that fall enrolled as a student of Hamma Divinity School in preparation for the Gospel Ministry. The summer of 1912, he was student supply at Trivoli, Ill., where he met Miss Nannie Opie, to whom he was united in marriage March 22, 1913. That summer the Dickeys supplied St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Evanston, and in the fall Mrs. Dickey enrolled at the Seminary to take a course in theology, so that she might be of greater help to her husband in his chosen work.

Rev. Dickey was installed as St. John's Missionary Pastor, June 21, 1914, here in our church. The charge to the congregation was given by Dr. Luther B. Wolf, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. The charge to the pastor was given by Dr. E. C. Harris, Pastor of St. John's.

Rev. and Mrs. Dickey left their native land, Oct. 21, 1914, and their entire voyage to India was made exceedingly dangerous because of the outbreak of World War I. They reached Guntur, however, in safety Dec. 1, 1914. During

1915 and 1916 they were residents of "The Kinsinger Memorial" in Chirala, and in 1917 moved back to Guntur to take charge of the Taluk's work. From 1919 until their return to America on furlough in 1922, Rev. Dickey had charge of the work at Sattenapalli, twenty-three miles west of Guntur, whose Taluk work he still retained, making his superintendency one of 15,000 Christian people, 180 workers and 95 schools. Their three children, Harold Elverton, Rosemary Annetta, and Geraldine Olsie were born in India.

During their furlough, the Dickeys visited St. John's in Sterling where they were received with great joy, and the people of our church heard first hand from Rev. and Mrs. Dickey of their many experiences in India. It was an especially happy occasion for Pastor and Mrs. Harris, who themselves had served as missionaries in this same territory, to hear of the work that was so dear to their hearts.

Upon their return to India in Sept. 1923, Rev. and Mrs. Dickey were assigned to the pioneer work of building up the new station at Repalli. Here he did his last and best work. It was here that Rev. and Mrs. Dickey were both stricken with ptomaine poisoning, caused by eating tainted food. The physician and nurse from Guntur came to minister to them, and Mrs. Dickey responded to treatment rapidly, but with Pastor Dick-

ey it was otherwise. Weary and worn from the arduous task of constructing new buildings on the compound, besides the growing Taluk work, he was unable to throw off the poison, and growing weaker, his heart finally failed Oct. 2, 1926.

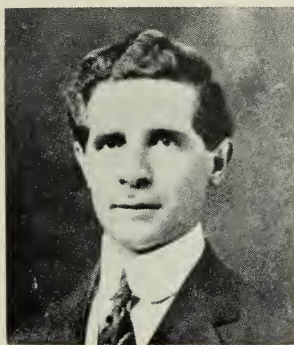
Funeral services were held at St. Matthew's Church in Guntur and burial took place in the European Cemetery.

Rev. Dickey's life was characterized by deep consecration to his Savior and Master. He was willing to serve in any position to which he was called, and perhaps no missionary was moved from one field to another more often than he. While the acquisition of the Telugu language was difficult for him, his persistence and studious habits won, and he became a most valuable evangelistic missionary in telling "the old, old story of Jesus and His Love."

During the whole of Rev. Dickey's service as a missionary in India, he was connected with St. John's as its Missionary Pastor. It was his first and only missionary assignment. After his passing, his family returned to this country and the last news of them is that they are living on the west coast.

**Rev. S. C. Burger, D. D.
Missionary Pastor
1927 - 1931**

After the death of Rev. Dickey, St. John's transferred its support of a mis-



Rev. Dickey



Mrs. Dickey



Rev. Burger

sionary in India to Rev. S. C. Burger who had been active in the field for many years.

Rev. Sylvester C. Burger arrived in Guntur, India in 1898, just a year before the Harrises came to Guntur. In 1902-03 the Harrises and the Burgers shared the same cottage.

In the beginning Rev. Burger was engaged in educational work, taking over as the head of the Training School in Feb. 1900. He and his wife and son, Keith, returned to America on furlough, April 1, 1907.

Upon his return to India he was placed in charge of the Tenali and Baptla Charges. During World War I, he was largely responsible for the saving of the Hermannsburg Mission, being located during those trying times at Tirupati. It was shortly after this on Oct. 5, 1919 that he suffered the loss of his wife.

During the "twenties" and "thirties",

Rev. Burger was in charge of the Andhra Lutheran Church of the Telugu Country, besides having charge of the work centering in Narsapur of the West Godavery District of South India.

After many years of very effective work in India, Dr. Burger lives in well-deserved retirement at Daytona Beach, Florida.

Too much cannot be said about the efforts exerted by Pastor and Mrs. Harris in the interest of the Missionary Pastor program of our church. They not only did much to promote the program within the congregation but through the years gave generously of their means for the support of the work.

Difficulty in raising the funds needed for this work during the depression period brought an end to the full support of a missionary pastor. In more recent years partial support for a missionary pastor has been sponsored by organizations of the church.

Sons Of St. John's — Ministers Of The Gospel

Every Christian congregation takes great pride in its sons who enter the Holy Ministry. During the first century in the life of St. John's, two young men from her midst chose the preaching of the Gospel as their life's work.

Dr. W. C. Seidel

The first son of St. John's to answer the call to the Ministry was Dr. W. C. Seidel. William C. Seidel was born in Wurtemberg, Germany, April 22, 1843, and came to this country with his parents, John and Barbara Seidel, when he was ten years of age. They settled in Ohio and about ten years later came to Sterling, where they united with St. John's on March 22, 1862. It is interesting to note that on that same date Cassie L. Wolfersberger, who was to become Mrs. Seidel, also joined the church.

Early in 1864, Mr. Seidel enlisted in Company A of the 140th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers. Returning to Sterling after the close of the war, he enter-

ed Illinois University at Springfield in 1866. This same year he served as lay delegate from St. John's at the meeting of Synod and again the following year.

Rev. Seidel was licensed to preach by the Synod of Northern Illinois at its meeting at Polo on Oct. 14, 1872. He was graduated from the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., in 1873, and in September of that year was married. On Oct. 5, 1873 he was ordained by the Synod of Northern Illinois at its meeting at Carthage, having accepted a call to the Pastorate at Davis, Illinois.

In 1876, Rev. and Mrs. Seidel were called to Kansas to serve as Home Missionaries, their work resulting in the organization of several new churches. From Kansas, Rev. Seidel moved to Pennsylvania where he served congregations in West Fairview and Carlisle. Ill health caused him to give up his pastorate in 1896.

In 1905, Dr. Seidel organized St.

Paul's Lutheran Church in Nashville, Tenn., where he served until 1909, when ill health again forced him to relinquish his work. He then returned to Sterling where he made his home until his death on April 1, 1923.

Here, for many years, Dr. Seidel devoted his time to the writing and distribution of religious tracts, and working for the many agencies of the church, with special emphasis on our Foreign Mission work in India. His good wife, who was for so many years his faithful helper in his chosen work, passed to her final reward July 30, 1940.

Rev. C. C. Warfel

The second son of St. John's to answer the call of the Ministry was Clarence Warfel, son of Mrs. Florence and the late John Warfel of Rock Falls. Clarence C. Warfel was born north of Sterling on June 20, 1912. He received his early education at the West Science Ridge and Rock Falls schools. In 1937 he graduated from Carthage College and entered Maywood Seminary in the fall of that year, graduating with his divinity degree in May of 1940.

Rev. Warfel was ordained at the meeting of the Illinois Synod at Chicago Heights, May 16, 1940, with Rev. J. Bannen Swope preaching the ordination sermon, and his pastor the Rev. A. H. Keck, Jr., of St. John's, assisting in the laying on of hands. Rev. Warfel accep-

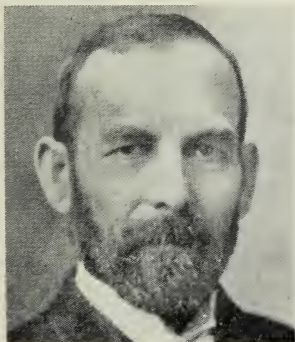
ted a call to be Assistant Pastor of Children's Memorial Church, Kansas City, Mo., June 1, 1940.

On Oct. 20, 1940, Rev. Warfel was united in marriage to Marjorie Baumgartner of Moline, and to this union have been born one son and two daughters.

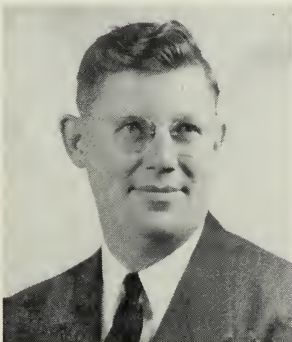
Rev. Warfel accepted a call to St. Mark's Lutheran Church at Nokomis, Ill., Nov. 15, 1941. He was installed in his new pastorate on Dec. 7, 1941, with Rev. Marvin C. Reichert preaching the Installation Sermon. While at Nokomis, Rev. Warfel served as Secretary of the Central Conference of the Illinois Synod. Here he stayed until March 12, 1944, when he accepted a call to Amity Lutheran Church of Lena, Ill. He was installed on March 19, 1944, by Rev. A. H. Keck, Jr., of St. John's, Sterling. During his stay at Lena, Pastor Warfel served for a time as Secretary of the Northern Conference of Synod.

After eight years of outstanding service at Lena, Rev. Warfel accepted a call to Grace Lutheran Church at Monroe, Wis., on March 17, 1952. He was installed March 23, 1952 by President Harmon J. McGuire of the Illinois Synod, and is at present serving the people of this congregation. He is active in local affairs and is the current President of the Green County Ministerial Association.

Your historian has in his possession



Dr. W. C. Seidel



Rev. C. C. Warfel



Warren Thummel

a most interesting letter from Pastor Warfel in which he recalls his youth in our church. He mentions the many fine Sunday School teachers he had and what a fine influence they were during his boyhood.

Rev. Warfel remembers the kindly guidance of Dr. Harris, the encouragement of members of the congregation, the influence of a good Christian home, his Y.M.C.A. work and his years at college as all playing an important part in his decision to enter the Ministry.

Pastor Warfel states that he enjoys all phases of his work, and that he can think of no other work that can bring a greater sense of satisfaction than that of serving as a pastor of a congregation of Christians, and leading them in finding peace of life through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It will be a happy occasion for St. John's and for Pastor Warfel when he returns during our centennial celebration to occupy the pulpit during one of the services. We are proud of the fine record Pastor Warfel has made for himself, and we wish for him continued success and even more satisfying accomplishments in the future.

Warren Thummel

As St. John's enters the second century of her existence, it is indeed gratifying to know that another son of our congregation is preparing for the Ministry. Warren Thummel, son of Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Thummel, is now enrolled at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood. Warren will also appear in the pulpit during our centennial services.

One hundred years ago, Dr. C. B. Thummel often preached to the people of St. John's. Now, during our centennial, his great great grandson is scheduled to make one of his first pulpit appearances, here in St. John's. Our prayers and best wishes go with Warren as his training for the Ministry continues. And when it has been completed, we shall follow his labors as a Minister of

the Gospel with great interest.

St. John's is proud of her sons who have chosen the Ministry as their life's work. We earnestly hope that others in our midst will hear the call in the days to come and will answer it by becoming servants of the Lord.

The Church Council

The first Church Council consisted of two Elders, two Deacons and the Pastor. During the years, as the congregation has grown, this number has been increased until we now find four Elders, eight Deacons and the Pastor. The Constitution of our church states that the Council shall be charged with the administration of the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation.

From the very beginning, the Council of St. John's has faced many problems, both large and small. There is no doubt but that the efforts of early Council members often saved the struggling little congregation from ceasing to exist. The record shows that they gave freely of their time and their means—often carrying the greater part of the load.

The responsibilities falling to the lot of the Church Council today are many, and the job is not always easy. St. John's is indeed fortunate to have men who serve willingly, and seriously try to do what is expected of them.

The organization of the Council at the present time is as follows:

President, Pastor Grewe
Vice-President, Sterling Carter
Secretary, George Davis, Jr.
Fin. Sec.-Treas., Harold Wade

Elders

Clarence Bressler
Sterling Carter
Leo Lund
William McFalls

Deacons

Charles Behrens
Mason Behrens
Gunnar Benson
George Davis, Jr.



Church Council — 1954

I. Clyde Eshleman
Ray Loos
Dan Metzger, Jr.
Harold Wade

The Council meets regularly on the first Monday of each month, and at such times as is necessary to transact the business of the church. Council members are elected for four-year terms and may not serve more than two successive terms.

The Ministry Of Music

Music, both vocal and instrumental, has played an important part in the worship service at St. John's through the years. Not too much is known about the church music in the earliest days of our congregation, but bits of information have drifted down to us so we know that music was important to the founders of our church.

One of the foundation stones of the Lutheran Church was the church hymn, and it has been said that "Luther won as many souls for the Lutheran Church by the singing of hymns as he did with preaching." Singing Lutheran hymns has always held a prominent place in our service of worship.

Early members of the congregation remembered that Henry Landis led the congregation in singing with his violin. Rev. W. A. Lipe was a great singer (even attracting the attention of Dwight L. Moody), and made St. John's a singing congregation. Jonas Windom and Abram Waldron are the first known choristers, having served before and after the Civil War.

Reed organs were used in the "Little White Church," the second instrument having an ornate panel of pipes. The shell of the first organ has been preserved and will be on display during our centennial. May Sigler (Reitzel) is mentioned in Council Minutes for 1884, as organist. It is not known how long she served.

Organists through the years since that time have been May Benner, Emma

Eisele, Edna Hazard (Loux), Clara Cochran (Pitney), Amy Colquist (Linn), Mrs. Pearl Graehling, Mrs. Dora Wiles, Mrs. Bertha Wingate, William Lewis, and Mrs. Roscoe Eades. The faithful service given by our organists through the years has done much to enhance the service of worship.

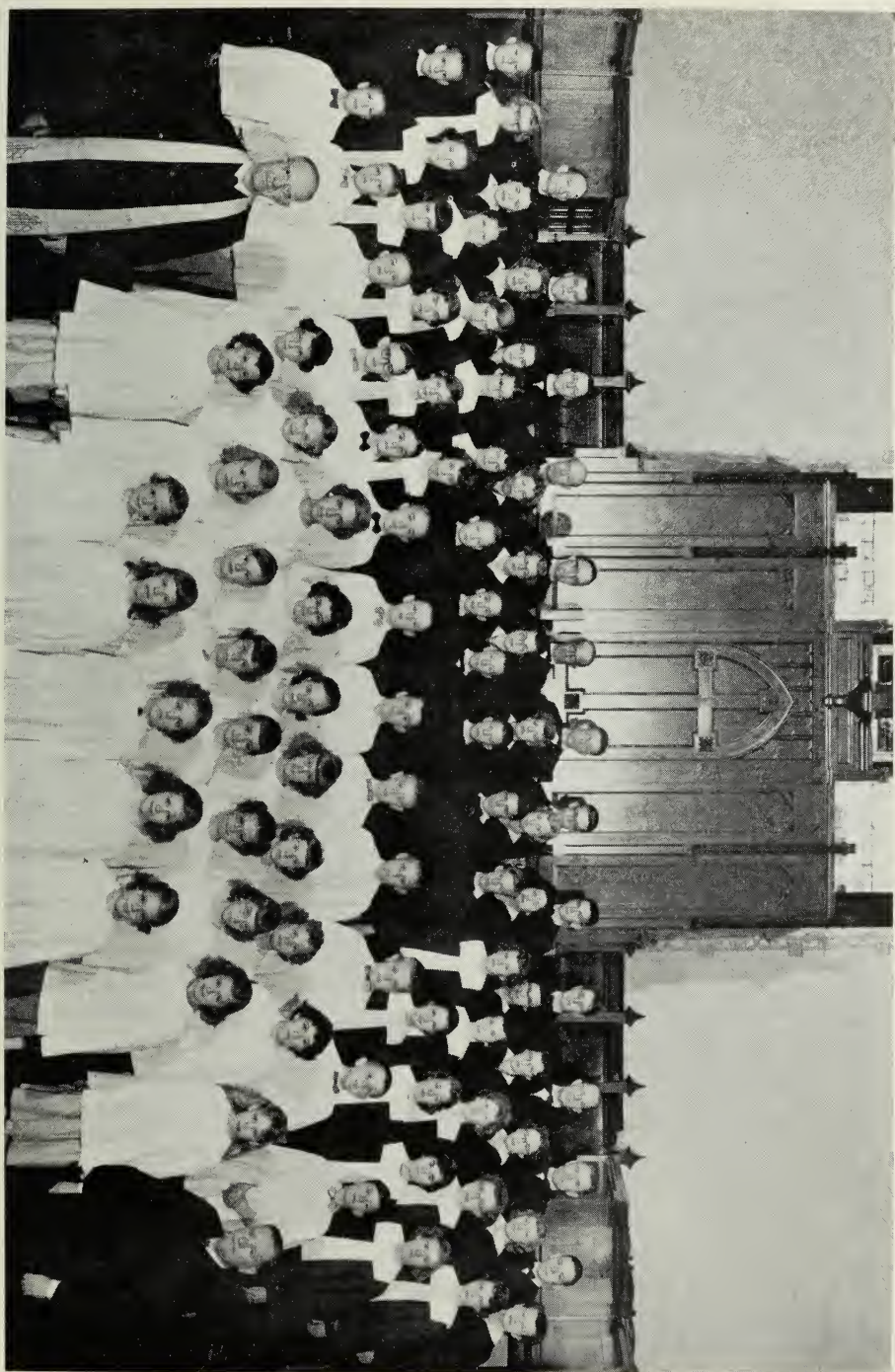
Before the water motor was purchased for the organ in 1902, a very important service was performed by the organ pumper, a familiar sight in the days gone by. Some of the young men who provided the power for the organ around the turn of the century were Nevin Loux, Willie Haug, Bert Baer, Farraday Strock and Frank Reed.

A new Kilgen organ was installed and dedicated during the 50th Anniversary Jubilee in 1904. This instrument served for twenty years, after which it was sold to the Congregational Church in Rock Falls where it is still in use today. The present organ was installed in 1924 when the new sanctuary was dedicated. This fine Moller organ was the gift of Mrs. Clara Martin.

Choral music in St. John's has gone through many stages. From time to time there have been choirs for different age groups. As in many churches, the choral music has had its high and low points. In its most flourishing days, great cantatas have been presented. Men, women and children who have given of their time and talents in this important work of the church, deserve the highest commendations of the congregation.

Choir directors through the years, of whom we have a record, have been Ella Richards, Mr. Olmstead, Muriel Price, Ruth Caughey, Lloyd Andreas, Ella Richards, Mrs. Muriel Phelps, Dora Andreas (Wiles), Gunnar Benson, David Stryker, Gertine Schlough (Calligan), Mrs. Roscoe Eades, William Tonkin, Gunnar Benson, Mrs. Mildred Cleverly, William Lewis and Gunnar Benson.

The first attempt at having a Youth Choir came in 1928, when Dora Andreas organized a choir for boys and girls of



Combined Choirs — Easter, 1954

high school age. In 1933, a Junior Choir for boys and girls between the ages of ten and fifteen was organized by Gunnar Benson. Since that time, there have been from two to four choirs for various age groups.

At the present time, there are three active choirs. The Junior Choir is for boys and girls in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. The Youth Choir is for 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th graders. The Senior Choir is for those beyond this age group.

SENIOR CHOIR PERSONNEL

Director: Gunnar Benson

Accompanist: Mrs. Roscoe Eades

Sopranos

Arlene Behrens, Mrs. Chas. Behrens, Mrs. Keith Behrens, Mrs. Leland Davis, Mrs. Raymond Fulfs, Jane Harting, Mrs. John Hey, Ruth Kilgus, Ann Lundstrom, Janet Oltmanns, Verna Oltmans, Ann Scheineman, and Jane Thummel.

Altos

Mrs. Gunnar Benson, Joan Eshleman, Mrs. Eugene Eubank, Sandra Haberer, Mrs. James Haskell, Mrs. Dan Metzger, Jr., Mrs. Theodore Myhre, Barbara Peterson and Joanne Whitaker.

Tenors

Gunnar Benson, Eugene Eubank, Robert Lund, Lloyd Schott, Don Schontz, and Ralph Weigle.

Basses

John Benson, Edwin R. Bowers, Gene Brandt, Philip Breiding, Neal Bressler, Leland Davis, Lloyd Elflin, Wayne Friedrichs, Charles Holloway, and Chris Kilgus.

YOUTH CHOIR PERSONNEL

Director: Gunnar Benson

Accompanist: Mrs. Roscoe Eades
Choir Mothers: Mrs. Clarence Bressler, Mrs. John Goshert and Mrs. Marie Taylor

David Allen, Patty Beck, Georgia Behrens, Judy Bohlken, Wilma Burger, Philip Burger, Sandra Braun, Larry Braun, Lyle Bressler, Charles Carter, Meredith Carter, William Davis, Robert Elflin, Eddie Evans, Frances Farver, Delores Feather, Judith Fisher, Mary Kay McGlaughlin, Susan Goshert, Carolyn Hains, Penny Heffelfinger, Thomas Hilger, Loren Holloway, Richard Huber, Vickie Huenger, Earl Janssen, Leslie Johnson, Walter Kilgus, Margie Knuth, Ruth Landis, Pamela Lentz, Aina Levalds, Nancy Sulouff, Jannet Taylor, Sandra Thomas, Janice White, and Ronald Zemke.

JUNIOR CHOIR PERSONNEL

Director: Mrs. Roscoe Eades

Accompanist: Carole Benson

Choir Mothers: Mrs. Joe Allison, Mrs. Wayne Fritz, and Mrs. Edward Ohda

Karen Allison, Gerald Baker, Michael Baker, David Beck, Cheryl Behrens, Carole Benson, Barbara Bogott, David Breed, Kay Elflin, George Ernst, Sandra Fritz, Mary Lou Gaskill, Carolyn Hafner, Shirley Hammelman, Mary Jean Howard, Ruth Howard, Arthur Keefer, Lowell Kilgus, Nancy Kindel, Pamela Klocke, Patricia Kreider, Ann Landis, Jeri Marsh, Stephen Metzger, John Mitchel, Judy Null, Randol Ohda, Mary Kay Plautz, Donna Reed, Karen Redfield, Thomas Schwab, Roger Swartley, Jacqueline Thummel, Mary Tyne, Barbara Wagner, Sheryl Wechsler, Sharon Wechsler, and Douglas Zemke.

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Rev. Keck very aptly stated the function of the Auxiliary organizations of the church in the 85th anniversary booklet, as follows:

"The organizations are not apart from the church but are of it and by it and

for it. They provide study, worship, service, and fellowship for those within the membership, in groups which are naturally bound together by sex, age, or interest. None of them take the place of the services of worship in which the en-

tire congregation should unite. Activity in any of them cannot substitute for the fulfilment of the privileges and duties of Church membership through the means of grace. These organizations exist to serve the congregation, not to be served by it; they are burden-bearers and not burdens. They provide additional opportunities for any member to carry out the obligations of his faith."

The material that follows, briefly describes the organizations that exist in our church today. Mention has also been made of societies that have existed in the past.

The Sunday School

St. John's Sunday School is the oldest and largest auxiliary organization in our church. It is also the only subsidiary organization of the church that is provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws of our church.

Section V of the By-Laws says in part—"1. A Bible (Sunday) School shall be maintained by the congregation for the training of its members, especially children and young people, in the knowledge and practice of the religion held and confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church."

All information available points to the fact that our Sunday School was organized in 1861 by Pastor W. A. Lipe, who served as the first Superintendent. In 1862, he reported 50 scholars and ten teachers to Synod.

Under Pastor Lipe's fine leadership and supervision, the Sunday School continued to grow, and became a very strong member of the Whiteside County Sunday School Association. Other Superintendents in the early years were; Abram Waldron, Rufus L. Lipe, Harry Keefer, Fred Eyster, W. W. Davis and Louis Kline.

In 1908, George L. Carolus became Superintendent of the Sunday School and continued to serve for over 30 years. He was in turn succeeded by Leroy Thummel, Hugo Weyrauch, Walter Grebner, Christian Kilgus, Dr. Harold

Readel, Lloyd Elfline and Daniel Metzger, Jr.

There have been many workers in St. John's Sunday School who have given years of devoted service. The list would be long, and could not possibly be complete because too much that has been outstanding has not been recorded.

It has been the unselfish and untiring efforts of these people that have made St. John's Sunday School for years, one of the most potent religious organizations in Sterling.

Our Sunday School is open to all who wish to learn more about the Bible and the teachings of our Savior, Jesus Christ. There are classes for all ages and groups.

The officers and teachers of the Sunday School at the present time are:

Dan Metzger, Jr., General Supt.
Dr. Harold Readel, Asst. Supt.
Nelson P. Wolf, Secretary
I. Clyde Eshleman, Treasurer
Nevin R. Loux, Supply Secretary
Mrs. A. H. Breiding, Enrollment Sec.
Raymond Harting, Librarian
Mrs. Alfred L. Grewe, Pianist
Joan Eshleman, Asst. Pianist
Ruth Kilgus, Asst. Pianist

Adult Department Teachers

Mrs. Fred J. Behrens, Sterling Carter, Dr. Alfred L. Grewe, Mrs. Gabriel Landis, Leroy Thummel, Mrs. Leon Worth, George Hartman, Jr.

Intermediate Department Teachers

Mrs. Charles Behrens, Mrs. Charles Buyers, Laurence Dimond, Frank Duis, Jr., Mrs. Irwin Koser, and Lloyd Schott.

Junior Department

Miss Florence Kreider, Supt.
Mrs. Christian Kilgus, Asst. Supt.
Arnis Sedols, Sec.-Treas.
Gabriel Landis, Asst. Sec.-Treas.
Miss Arlene Behrens, Pianist
Mrs. Leonard Schwab, Chorister

Teachers

Charles Behrens, Earl Dalgren, Mrs. George Davis, Jr., Mrs. Arthur Doty, Mrs. Marion Farver, Mrs. Raymond Leusby, Robert Lund, Miss Joyce Sulouff,

Mrs. Walter Smith, Mrs. Harold Null, and Lee Tyne.

Primary Department

Miss Laura Chalmers, Supt.
Mrs. Wayne Fritz, Asst. Supt.
Miss Ruth Haberer, Sec.-Treas.
Miss Ann Scheineman, Asst. Sec.-Treas.
Miss Joan Boese, Pianist

Teachers

Miss Gale Aper, Miss Mildred Deets, Miss Doris Doty, Mrs. J. M. Havner, Mrs. Edward Huntley, Mrs. Olga Jaquet, Miss Dorothy Loos, Mrs. William McFalls, Miss Janet Oltmanns, Miss Verna Oltmanns, Miss Betty Sulouff, and Mrs. Cyril Tyne.

Beginner's Department

Mrs. Raymond Harting, Supt.
Mrs. Dan Metzger, Jr., Asst. Supt.
Miss Bess Ebersole, Sec.-Treas.
Mrs. Clarence Reeher, Asst. Sec.-Treas.
Mrs. Gilbert Zarr, Pianist

Teachers

Mrs. Glenn Gaskill, Mrs. Kurt Granzow, Mrs. Walter Hardy, Mrs. Otto Heida, Jr., Mrs. Frank Leitz, Mrs. James Mays, Mrs. Edmond Reichard, Mrs. Charles Richards, Mrs. Lawrence Smith, and Mrs. Carroll Taylor.

Cradle Roll Department

Mrs. Carroll Taylor, Supt.

Home Department

Mrs. Fred A. Hay, Supt.

MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

From the very beginning, St. John's has been interested in the missionary work of the church as the earliest parochial reports to Synod will show. The first known attempt to organize a society for the support of missions came in 1883. Since that time, other societies have been formed, and the support for this work reached a new high under the leadership and encouragement of Pastor and Mrs. Harris, who, themselves, had served as missionaries in India. Today we have three missionary societies, each serving a different age or interest group, but all having the same goal, the support and understanding of the mission program of the Lutheran Church.

The Women's Missionary Society Harris Circle

This society is the oldest auxiliary society in our church except for the Sunday School. It had its beginning on Sept. 19, 1883, with 14 charter members, and has been continuously active except for a few years shortly after it was organized. This society has been a leader in Synod's Mission Program, and several years has been listed as the largest society in Illinois Synod.

Synodical conventions have been held in Sterling on numerous occasions, the last such meeting being here in 1951.

Thousands of dollars have been contributed by this society to the missionary work of our church, entirely through voluntary giving, Thank offerings, legacies, and life and memorial memberships.

This organization, with 60 members, is not large in numbers, but has remained faithful to its purpose of supporting the Home and Foreign Mission Work of the U.L.C.A. in every way possible.

A number of years ago, this society began calling itself the Harris Circle of the Women's Missionary Society, in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Harris who did so much to promote this work in St. John's, and in recognition of their missionary service in India.

For a number of years, the Women's Missionary Society sponsored a children's division in the Sunday School, called Children of the Church. This phase of the missionary program was discontinued by the U.L.C.A. a few years ago, and more recently was dropped in our church, the Sunday School still carrying on some of this work.

All women of the congregation are eligible for membership in this society which meets the third Wednesday of every month at 2:15 P. M. The present officers are:

President: Mrs. Wesley Hicks
Vice-President: Mrs. Fred J. Behrens
Secretary: Mrs. Albert Breiding, Jr.
Treasurer: Mrs. Nevin Loux

The Edith Eykamp Circle

In September of 1930, the Sunday School Classes of Mrs. E. C. Harris and Mrs. Anna M. Weyrauch, which had become interested in Missions through the fine leadership of Mrs. Harris, organized themselves as a missionary society and took the name of one of our fine missionaries in India, Miss Edith Eykamp of Polo, Illinois. There were about 20 charter members.

Mrs. Harris led these young ladies in a study of the mission program of Synod and service projects for its promotion. The group has continued strong, and since its organization, the society has aided in all efforts of the larger society in helping both home and foreign missions.

The society, which now numbers 45, is striving to reach 100% in life membership in connection with St. John's Centennial. This group meets on the second Monday of each month and is open to any woman of our congregation. The officers at present are:

President: Mrs. Leonard Schwab
Vice-President: Mrs. Charles Buyers
Secretary: Mrs. James Mays
Treasurer: Mrs. Gordon Johnson

Erva Moody Missionary Society

This society was organized March 28, 1944 as an evening missionary society, so that working women and young mothers with little children might have a chance to do their part in supporting the missionary work of the U.L.C.A. It replaced a former evening missionary society, organized in 1913, which had been absorbed by the older society. Mrs. Albert H. Keck, Jr. was the organizer of this group which takes its name from one of our fine missionaries who served in China for many years and was driven from the field by the communists.

The Erva Moody Missionary Society now has 27 members and is open to all women of the congregation. They meet on the first Tuesday evening of each

month. A recent project of the society has been the sponsoring of the beautiful souvenir anniversary plates. Present officers of the organization are:

President: Mrs. Earl Dahlgren
Vice-President: Mrs. Clinton Hilger
Secretary: Mrs. William Pratt
Treasurer: Mrs. Walter Smith

The Luther League

The Luther League is an organization for young people in our church. It is an outgrowth of the Christian Endeavor Societies of another day. The first Christian Endeavor Society was organized in 1888, with St. John's claiming the largest C. E. Society in Whiteside County for many years.

The Luther League of Christian Endeavor was organized about 1917, and in 1922, this group united with the Illinois Luther League and has maintained connection with the Synod of Illinois since that time. In time, the Christian Endeavor Societies were disbanded, and the Luther League, since then, has served our young people.

The Luther League has usually had two societies in order to better serve the different age groups. At present, the Intermediate League is for confirmed members of St. John's who have not reached the Junior year in high school. The Senior League is made up of confirmed members of St. John's who are Juniors and Seniors in High School and older, if not married. Each League has a membership of 35 at present.

Both organizations are interested in providing good Christian fellowship for fellow Lutherans; developing better spiritual lives; becoming better church members; and in rendering effective service in extending the Kingdom of God.

The two Leagues meet on alternate Sunday evenings at 6:45 o'clock, with the first part of each meeting being devoted to worship and study. After the devotions, each group enjoys a social hour.

Purely recreational evenings and outings are planned by the Leagues and occasionally, the two groups join forces in their social activities.

For many years, the Luther League has promoted the sale of "The Lutheran" in the congregation so that our people might be better informed on the work of the church at large. Monies raised during the year by various projects are used for the support of Nachusa, Missions and other Synod-sponsored activities.

Officers of the Intermediate League are:

President: Sue Schwab
Vice-President: Leslie Johnson
Secretary: Sally Hennings
Treasurer: Mary Kay McGlaughlin
Sponsors: Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Bressler

Officers of the Senior League are:

President: Joanne Whitaker
Vice-President: Neal Bressler
Secretary: Sandra Haberer
Treasurer: Ann Lundstrom
Evangelism Chm.: Ruth Kilgus
Social Action Chm.: John Benson
Missionary Chm.: Jane Thummel
Rec. Chm.: Betty Sulouff, Bob Lund
Christian Vocations: George Hartman
Luther League Post: Joanne Whitaker
Sponsors: Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel Landis

The Ladies' Social Circle

This group was organized May 16, 1900, to foster fellowship among the women of St. John's and to render service to the church through special activities, and cooperation in the achievement of the purposes of the congregation. It shares the basic aims of the church, namely, the inner unity and maintenance of the faith, and the extension of the Kingdom of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Social Circle meets the first Wednesday of each month (except August), beginning with a one o'clock luncheon. Any woman of our congregation, who is interested in the work of the church, is welcome as a member of the

group. The society now claims about 200 members.

St. John's Social Circle has, from the beginning, been a working and giving organization of the church. It has sponsored the Annual Suppers and Bazaars since 1905, when it united with the Ladies' Aid in this project. The Circle also has served many banquets through the years.

The Social Circle has been generous in giving financial aid to worthy community projects such as Red Cross, Community Chest and the Hospital Fund.

In recent years, this group has been responsible for the remodeling and re-furnishing of the kitchen and the parlor in the basement as two of its larger projects.

Whenever there has been need for material aid in St. John's, the Social Circle always has responded very generously. For the last three years, scholarships to Long Lake Bible Camp have been granted to our young people for perfect Church and Sunday School attendance.

This society has taken over the work carried on in the early days of our church by the Ladies' Aid Society. The Aid Society was in time absorbed by the Social Circle as its members passed on, or became too aged to remain active.

The present officers of the Social Circle are:

President: Mrs. Noah Lehman
Vice-President: Mrs. Fred J. Behrens
Rec. Sec.: Mrs. Leon C. Worth
Fin. Sec.: Mrs. Clarence Bressler
Treasurer: Miss Ruth Hoffman

The Lutheran Brotherhood

Dr. E. C. Harris was the prime mover in the organization of St. John's Brotherhood, which was founded on March 29, 1910, with 48 charter members. The purposes of this organization are: "To lead men into fellowship with Christ and the Church; to promote the spiritual, intellectual and social welfare of its members; to quicken the activity and

increase the efficiency of the congregation with which it is connected; to give men in every condition of life, especially in times of trial, the stimulus of Christian comradeship and the inspiration that comes from association of men with kindred aims. As a brotherhood, it stands for everything that tends to a noble manhood."

This very fine organization of men has been a powerful influence in the church through the years. It has sponsored many worthwhile projects, and has brought to its annual banquets outstanding speakers. The men of our Brotherhood have been leaders in the state-wide program of Brotherhood. Several times, men of St. John's have held the Presidency of the state organization as well as other offices. The first Synodical Brotherhood Convention was held in Sterling with St. John's as host.

The Brotherhood is open to all confirmed male members of our congregation. The group meets on the fourth Thursday of every month. The present officers are:

President: Bert Shannon
Vice-President: Laurence Dimond
Secretary: John Musselman
Treasurer: I. Clyde Eshleman

Troop 90 Boy Scouts

This troop of Boy Scouts was organized Feb. 18, 1926 as Troop 5, and two years later became known as Troop 90. The first Troop Committee consisted of Charles A. Smith, Hugo Weyrauch, and Fred A. Hay, with Walter Grebner as Scoutmaster.

The troop is open to boys who have reached their eleventh birthday, and who are interested in becoming better Christian citizens, and in building good character. Boys 11 to 14 are members of the regular troop, and those 14 and older are enrolled as Explorer Scouts. Meetings are held in the church basement every Wednesday evening.

The troop, sponsored by St. John's Brotherhood, has had a grand record,

and has been led by only three scoutmasters. Walter Grebner served from 1926 to 1941. He was succeeded by Dan Metzger, Jr. in 1941, his tenure lasting until 1945, when he was in turn succeeded by George Davis, Jr., who has served since that time. Walter Grebner was called back as Scoutmaster in 1944 and served until 1946, while Dan Metzger and George Davis were called into the military service.

Troop 90 has 60 Scouts and Explorers at the present time, and is led by the following men:

Scoutmaster: George Davis, Jr.
Asst. Scoutmaster: Lloyd Elfline
Explorer Advisor: Ken Kosier, Sr.
Institutional Rep.: Lloyd Schott
Treasurer: Earl Helms

Troop Committee:

Dan Metzger, Jr., Chm.
Charles Buyers
Charles Kreider
Clinton Hilger
John Hay
C. M. Tyne
Dr. A. L. Grewe (Honorary)

The Social Gardeners

The Social Gardeners came into being in the early Spring of 1934, when a group of 21 ladies from the Social Circle decided to form a society so that they might together pursue their common interest in plants, flowers, etc.

This group meets the fourth Wednesday of each month (except November) to share and study information on gardening, visit and study gardens, and to carry out projects related to this interest. Each year they sponsor a Flower Show in September, and for twenty years, this has been an outstanding affair, attracting people in large numbers from this and surrounding communities.

Once or twice a year, the group takes bus trips to distant exhibits, gardens and homes, as well as the Chicago Flower Show.

Any money earned by the organization is used to help beautify the church and grounds, and other church property, or some community property.

The society has for its motto, "We spread happiness through our gardens." This they have done through the years by remembering the sick and shut-in, and by decorating the church on many occasions. This group will decorate the church for our centennial observance.

The Social Gardeners now claim a membership of 93 and would be happy to have any member of St. John's, who is interested in the purposes of this organization, join them. The present officers of the society are:

- President: Mrs. F. E. Dieckmann
- 1st Vice-Pres.: Mrs. Ward Freeman
- 2nd Vice-Pres.: Mrs. Albert Peterson
- Secretary: Mrs. Wayne Trueblood
- Cor. Sec.: Mrs. Lloyd M. Eshleman
- Treasurer: Mrs. Carroll Taylor

The Loyal Lutherans

In December of 1948, a group of 24 young people met with Mr. and Mrs.

Leroy Thummel, as advisors, and organized themselves into a society called the Loyal Lutherans. The purpose of this society was to provide an organization for young married couples, and people out of high school, who were not of the Luther League age group.

In 1939, a similar organization for young married couples, only, had been organized by Rev. and Mrs. Keck. This organization, however, ceased to exist during war years when most of the men were called into the service, and the mothers found themselves tied down with their families.

The Loyal Lutherans has met the need for an organization of young people out of high school, and young married couples who wish to associate with church members of their own age in devotional study and recreation.

This group meets the third Tuesday of every month, and its officers at present are:

- President: Mrs. Leland Davis
- Vice-President: Wayne Trueblood
- Sec.-Treas.: Janet Oltmans

HONOR ROLL

On an occasion like the centennial anniversary of a church, one may very well wonder who has longest been associated with the congregation.

Long and faithful service to a church by its members is important to its growth and advancement. New members are also necessary for vitality in an organization, but members of long standing give any group continuity, loyalty, and devotion that are necessary to its continued success.

The names on the Honor Roll that follows indicate men and women who were members of St. John's on the occasion of her 50th anniversary, and who have maintained continuous membership since that time. Others may have belonged at that time, but their member-

ship has been interrupted by residence in some other community. Still others may approach 50 years of continuous membership, but, as can be easily understood, the line must be drawn at some point.

The date that follows each name indicates the year that person became a communing member of St. John's.

Mrs. Floy Frerichs.....	1890
Mrs. Edna Loux.....	1892
Mrs. Jennie Obendorf.....	1893
Mrs. Ida Le Fevre.....	1894
Miss Mollie Wentsel.....	1894
Mrs. Mary Andreas.....	1895
Mrs. Emma Landis.....	1895
Mr. Nevin R. Loux.....	1895
Mrs. Barbara Ramsdell.....	1897
Mrs. Edith Dieterle.....	1898
Miss Anna Ebersole.....	1900

Miss Ella Ebersole.....	1900
Mrs. Anna Goshert.....	1900
Mrs. Anna Hunter.....	1900
Mrs. Tena Johnson.....	1900
Mr. Clayton Royer.....	1900
Mrs. Hattie Sayers.....	1900
Mrs. Hattie Wade.....	1900
Mrs. Edna Walck.....	1900
Mr. Charles Weaver.....	1900
Mr. Elmer Beck.....	1901
Mrs. Anna M. Davis.....	1901
Mr. Fred B. Frerichs.....	1901
Mrs. Catherine Morris.....	1902
Mrs. Lucie Boxmeyer.....	1903
Mr. John Hartman.....	1903
Mr. Abram Kreider.....	1903
Mrs. Mertie Longfellow.....	1903
Mrs. Susan Weidel.....	1903
Mrs. Mary Davis.....	1904
Mr. Frank Duhm.....	1904
Miss Bessie Ebersole.....	1904
Mrs. Pearle Graehling.....	1904
Mrs. Lizzie Grieb.....	1904
Mrs. Anna Howe.....	1904
Mrs. Ella Karl.....	1904
Mr. Abram Landis.....	1904
Mrs. Amanda Landis.....	1904
Mr. David Neitzke.....	1904
Mrs. Hattie Reitzel.....	1904
Mrs. Ellen Shaw.....	1904
Mr. Harry Wade.....	1904
Mr. Stephen Weidel.....	1904
Mr. Donald Wilger.....	1904

Helpmates of The Pastors

In thinking of the history of a church, it is convenient to divide the years into pastorates, and recall the happenings of any such period in terms of the minister who served at that time. Naturally, the pastor is prominent in the appraisal of his term of service, which is to be expected. Too often, however, we are apt to fail to give credit to his very able companion in the parsonage.

Could the men, who have served as our pastors, all return and tell us what an important part these fine women have played in their effectiveness as leaders of St. John's, we would have to

add many more pages to this book.

We know little or nothing about the helpmates of the early pastors of our congregation, but what little has come down to us indicates that they were a real help and comfort to the pastor, and active in the work of the church. The effective service of more recent "mistresses of the manse" must also be recognized by the congregation at this time.

These good women usually operate in the shadows of their husbands, content to be good wives and mothers, and not wishing to detract from the work of the pastor. Each in her own way, however, has done much to indelibly stamp herself upon the memory of the congregation.

Let us take this opportunity to express to Mrs. Grewe, Mrs. Keck and Mrs. Harris, as well as those who have gone before, our deepest appreciation for the many fine things they have done for the congregation.

We are indeed happy at the prospect of having Mrs. Harris with us during our Centennial Week so that she may celebrate this occasion with us. We hope that Mrs. Keck can also be here.

Bequests and Endowments

Members of St. John's have many times remembered their church in bequests left in the name of the congregation. Some of these gifts have been earmarked for specific use. Others have been left to be used at the discretion of the Church Council and the congregation.

This thoughtfulness on the part of departed members has made possible improvements and additions that might not otherwise have been realized. The practice of remembering the church in memorial bequests and endowments is certainly to be commended.

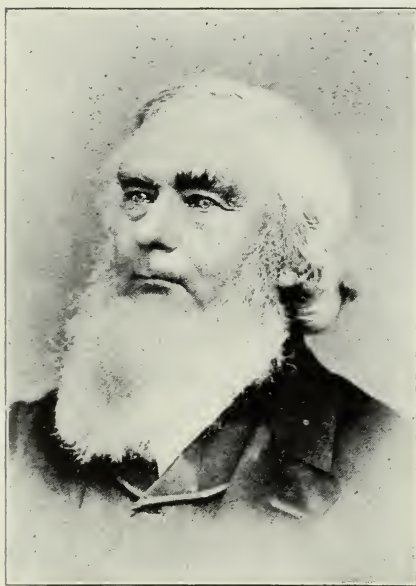
REV. C. B. THUMMEL, D. D.

Prairieville, Illinois

Although Dr. C. B. Thummel was never officially connected with St. John's of Sterling, he played such an important part in the early history of our church, both before and after its organization, that it is only right that we here pay tribute to this great pioneer of Lutheranism in Northern Illinois.

Christian Bernard Thummel was born in Germany on April 5, 1802. His youth was spent in acquiring an excellent education in his native land. He was the master of seven languages and majored in Philology, Philosophy and Theology. In 1824, he was accepted into the ministry of the Lutheran Church in Germany. Being unjustly accused of being affiliated with a hostile political group, and seeing no chance of clearing himself, he took the advice of the Grand Duke of Jever and left the country, arriving in Philadelphia in August of 1826.

After being admitted to the Minis-



Dr. C. B. Thummel

terium of New York in 1827, Rev. Thummel spent several years in Pennsylvania, New York, South Carolina and Ohio, preaching and teaching. With his family, he set out for Illinois in 1845, and arrived in Palmyra Township, Lee County on Oct. 15th of that year. Here Dr. Thummel was to remain for the rest of his days, leaving an imprint upon the people of Lee and Whiteside Counties that is still very much in evidence.

Dr. Thummel soon became connected with the Synod of Illinois, and was largely instrumental in the organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois, that body having been founded in the Thummel home, one mile north of Prairieville on May 14, 1851.

The Lutherans of Sterling were served by Rev. Thummel before St. John's was organized. He preached to them, upon occasions, in their homes and was called upon to perform various ministerial acts. A study of his ministerial records shows that many baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc., were performed by him for forebears of some of the present members of St. John's. It is interesting to note that the last administering of a Holy sacrament by Dr. Thummel was the baptism of Edith Anna Schuck (Mrs. G. A. Fritz). Mrs. Fritz recently told the writer that Dr. Thummel's health at the time was such that it was necessary for him to perform this act from his bed. His last official act was to offer the closing prayer at the dedication of the Prairieville Church in February of 1881, being supported by two of his brethren of the ministry. Dr. Thummel closed his labors on this earth on May 24, 1881, and lies buried in the beautiful little cemetery, north of Prairieville.

During the pastorate of Rev. Uhl, who was also serving St. Paul's of Dixon at the same time, Rev. Thummel preached on alternate Sundays so that St. John's might have preaching every Sunday. Dr. Thummel was present when St. John's first church was dedicated, and his name appears on the list of contributors who

made this fine house of worship possible. The record shows that he was also present on many other occasions in later years.

Succeeding generations of the Thummel family have held membership in St. John's, and have taken an active interest in her work. During our Centennial services, as has already been mentioned, Dr. Thummel's great great grandson, Warren Thummel, will appear in the pulpit as one of our anniversary speakers. Warren is preparing for the ministry and is at present a student at Chi-

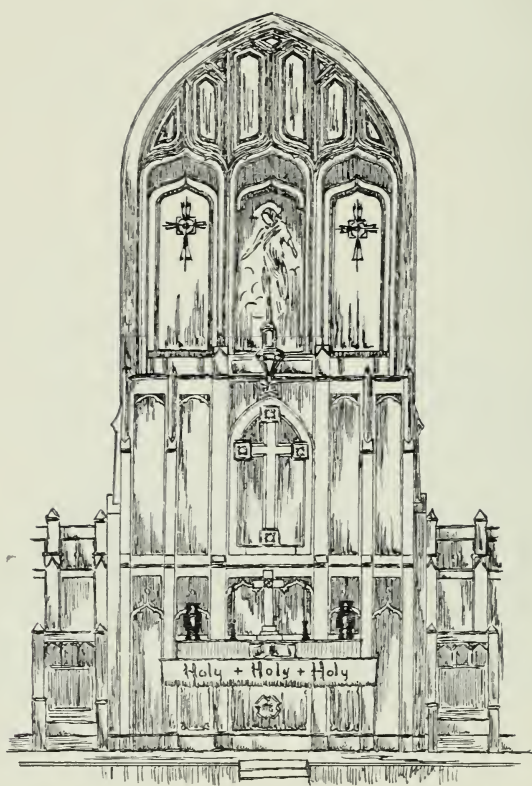
cago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood, Illinois.

The close association between the churches at Prairieville and Sterling was carried on after Dr. Thummel's passing by Pastors Brown, Fleck and Harris who preached in Prairieville for so many years. There was a similar close association with the Lutheran Church at Emerson. It was formed by members from St. John's and was in later years served by pastors from St. John's until the remaining members transferred to our church in 1933.



Thummel Home — Prairieville
Birthplace of Synod of Northern Illinois







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